

# **Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization**

## **Appendix Materials for Stevens Square Community Organization: An NRP Retrospective**

A CONSORTIUM PROJECT OF: Augsburg College; College of St. Catherine; Hamline University; Higher Education Consortium for Urban Affairs; Macalester College; Metropolitan State University; Minneapolis Community College; Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program; University of Minnesota (Center for Urban and Regional Affairs; Children, Youth and Family Consortium; Minnesota Extension Service); University of St. Thomas; and Minneapolis community and neighborhood representatives.

**Appendix Materials for  
Stevens Square Community Organization:  
An NRP Retrospective**

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Conducted on behalf of the Stevens Square Community Organization  
April, 1999

*This report [NPCR 1123] is also available at the following internet  
address: <http://freenet.msp.mn.us/org/npcr>*

# **Appendix Materials for**

**Stevens Square Community**

**Organization:**

**An NRP Retrospective**

**Prepared by Katie M. Groen**

in conjunction with the Neighborhood Planning for

Community Revitalization Program

University of Minnesota

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Neighborhood Planning for Community Revitalization

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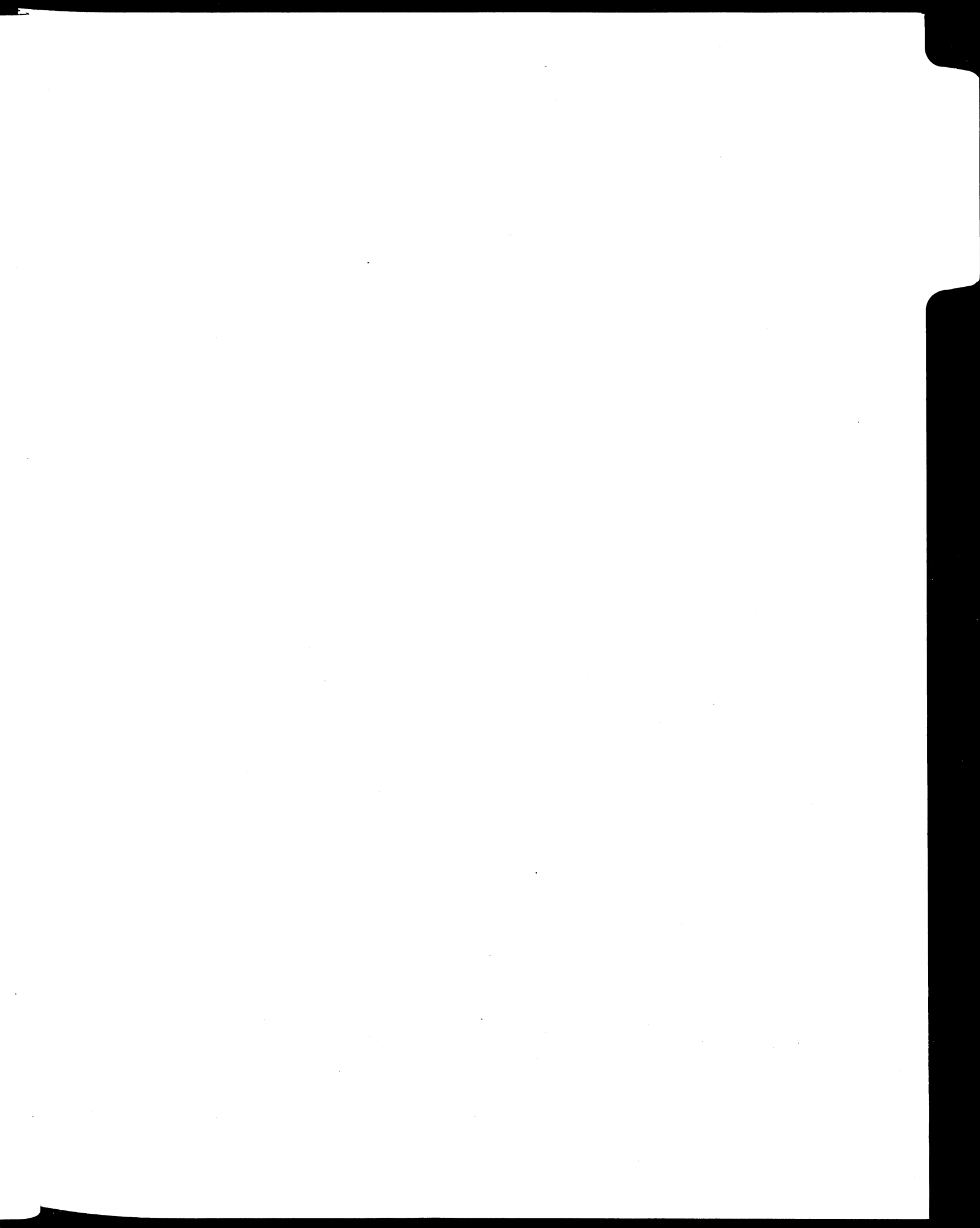
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## Supporting materials included:

- I. Summary of Financial Information
  - Plan Finances – December 1998
  - Loan Programs
  - Funding Percentages
- II. Strategy Assessment Sheet
- III. Completed Strategy Assessment Sheets
  - Community Safety
  - Community Services
  - Community Environment
  - Community Development
- IV. Interview Questions
- V. Individual Interview Summaries
- VI. NRP Review Team Report
- VII. Related Review Process Information
- VIII. Focus Group Methodology
- IX. Focus Group Questions
- X. Focus Group Summaries
- XI. Additional Focus Group Materials
  - Recruiting Scripts
  - Flyer
  - Confirmation Letter
- XII. Future Evaluation Information (provided in separate folder)
  - Handbook for Navigating through the Commercial Corridor Process
  - Neighborhood Sustainability Indicators Guidebook



# Stevens Square/Loring Heights NRP Funding

December 1998

	<u>Original Allocation</u>	<u>Spent</u>	<u>Contracted</u>	<u>Available Funds</u>
<u>Safety</u>				
Safety Coordinator	32,500	32,500	-	-
Police Radios	780	-	-	780
Block Patrol Equipment	8,020	8,020	-	-
Lighting & Fencing	30,000	3,319	26,681	-
	<b>\$71,300</b>	<b>\$43,839</b>	<b>\$26,681</b>	<b>\$780</b>
<u>Services</u>				
Social Services Plan	30,000	30,000	-	0
Resident Mngmnt Activities	20,000	20,000	-	0
	<b>\$50,000</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<u>Environment</u>				
Greening Fund	47,000	47,000	-	0
Trash Containers	10,000	-	6,456	3544
Nicollet Avenue	313,000	313,000	-	0
Overlook	125,000	125,000	-	0
Bridge Improvements	75,000	-	-	75000
Stevens Square Park	67,500	53,500	-	14000
Transit Plaza	15,000	-	-	15000
	<b>\$652,500</b>	<b>\$538,500</b>	<b>\$6,456</b>	<b>\$107,544</b>
<u>Development</u>				
Development Staff	49,859	49,859	-	-
SSCO Office Space	14,000	14,000	-	-
CDC Feasibility	4,141	4,141	-	-
Marketing Program	56,000	49,000	-	7,000
Neighbors Publication	27,500	19,212	8,288	-
Specific Commercial Properties	300,000	300,000	-	-
Public Parking Facilities	75,000	-	-	75,000
SCA Properties	500,000	500,000	-	-
Commercial Rehab Loan Fund	500,000	-	500,000	-
Residential Rehab Loan Program	1,525,000	-	1,525,000	-
	<b>\$3,051,500</b>	<b>\$936,212</b>	<b>\$2,033,288</b>	<b>\$82,000</b>
<u>Contingency Fund</u>				
Uses of Contingency	378800			
Resident Management '94		10000	0	0
Resident Management '95		10000	0	0
Nicollet Avenue		60000	0	0
Resident Management Corp '97		20000	0	0
3/10 Commercial Loan Staff		0	0	7500
Common Social Services Plan/Jobs Project		0	55250	194750
Balance Remaining		0	0	21300
	<b>\$378,800</b>	<b>\$100,000</b>	<b>\$55,250</b>	<b>\$223,550</b>
<u>Total</u>	<b>\$4,204,100</b>	<b>\$1,668,551</b>	<b>\$2,121,675</b>	<b>\$413,874</b>

## Loan Program Status

### Residential Rehabilitation Loan Program

(as of 12/17/98)

<u>Committed Funds</u>	<u>Available Funds</u>	<u>Total Future Available Funds</u>	<u>Non-Recoverable Funds</u>
\$ 775,296	\$ 541,532	\$ 1,316,828	\$ 284,581
			\$ 1,601,409

### Commercial Rehabilitation Loan Fund

(as of 12/30/98)

<u>Committed Funds</u>	<u>Available Funds</u>	<u>Total Future Available Funds</u>	<u>Non-Recoverable Funds</u>
\$ 92,723	\$ 252,605	\$ 345,328	\$ 154,672
			\$ 500,000

total available funds for both programs assumes no defaults on current loans

## Funding Percentages

### Safety

% of original allocation	1.7%
% of allocation available	1.1%

### Services

% of original allocation	1.2%
% of allocation available	0.0%

### Environment

% of original allocation	15.5%
% of allocation available	16.5%

### Development

% of original allocation	72.6%
% of allocation available	2.7%

### Contingency Fund

% of original allocation	9.2%
% of allocation available	59.0%

### Loan Funds

#### Residential

% of original allocation	36.3%
% of allocation available	35.5%

#### Commercial

% of original allocation	11.9%
% of allocation available	50.5%

### Total

% of original allocation	48.2%
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## **Strategy Assessment Report**

**Neighborhood:**

**Plan Section:**

**Goal:**        **Description:**

**Objective:**   **Description:**

**Strategy:**    **Description:**

**Resources Committed:**

**NRP:**

**Other:**

**What Was Done:**

**Results Achieved:**

**When:**

**Resources Used:**

**NRP:**

**Other:**

**Number of Participants:**

**Was strategy implemented?**

**Completely, Partially or Not at all**

**If "partially" or "not at all," why?**

**Is additional implementation scheduled to occur?**

**Yes or No**

**Has the objective been accomplished?**



**Yes, Partially or No**

**Should more be done?**

**Yes or No**

## **Strategy Assessment Report**

**Neighborhood:** Stevens Square/Loring Heights

**Plan Section:** Community Safety

**Goal #1**      **Description:** provide save and healthy environment and increase social stability

**Objective #1**      **Description:** establish a community and resource exchange community (CARE)

**Strategy #1**      **Description:** CARE intervention coordinator facilitating 2 monthly meeting in cooperation with SSCO. CARE staff will assist. SAMDA as needed to improve property owners management practices.

**Resources Committed:**

NRP: -----

Other: CARE Budget

**What Was Done:** the CARE program was initiated and a committee set up in the Steven Square Loring Heights Community in the early stages of the NRP. Shortly after the program, and duties were absorbed into safety programs.

**Results Achieved:** twenty-five meetings were held. The meetings addressed general issues relations to crime.

**When:** 1993 - 94

**Resources Used:**

NRP: ----

Other: Care Budget

**Number of Participants:** varied by meeting

**Was strategy implemented?** partially

**If "partially" or "not at all," why?** committee was established and intervention coordinator worked with but the program was dissolved.

**Is additional implementation scheduled to occur?** no

**Has the objective been accomplished?** partially yes, but the program was dissolved

**Should more be done?** no

## **Strategy Assessment Report**

**Neighborhood:** Stevens Square/Loring Heights

**Plan Section:** Community Safety

**Goal #1**      **Description:** provide a safe and healthy environment and increase social stability

**Objective #2**      **Description:** plan and strengthen all community safety strategies

**Strategy #1**      **Description:** provide funding for a neighborhood safety coordinator for SSCO and other necessary costs.

**Resources Committed:**

NRP: \$32,500

Other:

**What Was Done:** money was spent on staff , events, printing and postage.

**Results Achieved:** hire a staff person to work on safety issues 93 – present had resources to spend on community events.

**When:** 1993

**Resources Used:**

NRP: \$32,500

Other: ----

**Number of Participants:** 1 staff person, other individuals varied by event.

**Was strategy implemented?** completely

**If “partially” or “not at all,” why?**

**Is additional implementation scheduled to occur?** yes, ongoing with hired staff

**Has the objective been accomplished?** yes

**Should more be done?** yes, ongoing with staff

## **Strategy Assessment Report**

**Neighborhood:** Stevens Square/Loring Heights

**Plan Section:** Community Safety

**Goal #1**      **Description:** provide a safe and healthy environment and increase social stability

**Objective #3**      **Description:** community-based motor and foot patrols, increase current block patrol

**Strategy #1**      **Description:** two 5<sup>th</sup> precinct police officers will be assigned to community-based patrols and funds will be provided to SSCO for equipment and administrative costs to support current patrol

**Resources Committed:**

**NRP:** \$8800

**Other:** \$88,882 from existing Minneapolis Police Department budget

**What Was Done:** money was spent on equipment such as vests, office equipment/supplies, cell phones, and a portion of rent before the space became donated. Two officers are consistently on motor patrols in the neighborhood. The 5<sup>th</sup> precinct was "very responsive," this was instilled even before the NRP plan was developed.

**Results Achieved:** improved relations with police; built a relationship; achieved consistency in reporting; work proactively versus reactively; work out solutions together

The patrol has evolved into an ambassador-like program, providing assistance, referrals, helps connect those involved with the neighborhood. Crime and safety is a lot about perception, with the block patrol individuals involved get a better sense of real crime versus the perception. Feedback to the block patrol indicates the community feels safer.

**When:** 1993

**Resources Used:**

**NRP:** \$8020

**Other:** regular police budgets

**Number of Participants:** up to 40 individuals per year, up to 200 individuals

**Was strategy implemented?** completely

If "partially" or "not at all," why?

Is additional implementation scheduled to occur? yes, ongoing

Has the objective been accomplished? yes

Should more be done? yes, ongoing

## Strategy Assessment Report

**Neighborhood:** Stevens Square/Loring Heights

**Plan Section:** Community Safety

**Goal #1**      **Description:** provide a safe and healthy environment and increase social stability

**Objective #4**      **Description:** prohibit alcohol consumption in the park and control noise

**Strategy #1**      **Description:** ordinance enforcement by the 5<sup>th</sup> precinct police officers and the Minneapolis Park Police

**Resources Committed:**

**NRP:**

**Other:** existing Minneapolis Park Board and Police Dept budgets

**What Was Done:** the problem was pointed out to the officers as an issue

**Results Achieved:** issue is an ongoing struggle; enforcement somewhat depends on officers' priorities and methods, etc. Also a struggle because the park is under the jurisdiction of the park police versus the Minneapolis Police

**When:** 1993-present

**Resources Used:**

**NRP:**

**Other:** through park police and Mpls police budgets

**Number of Participants:**

**Was strategy implemented?** partially

**If "partially" or "not at all," why?** the park is monitored by the Park Police and there is less response from them than from the 5<sup>th</sup> precinct

**Is additional implementation scheduled to occur?** yes, ongoing

**Has the objective been accomplished?** partially

**Should more be done?** yes, specific suggestions included adjusting the bathroom and storage structures so they are less easy to hide in, etc.; add 911 call boxes; add more lighting

## **Strategy Assessment Report**

**Neighborhood:** Stevens Square/Loring Heights

**Plan Section:** Community Safety

**Goal #1**      **Description:** provide a safe and healthy environment and increase social stability

**Objective #5**      **Description:** increase lighting and fencing

**Strategy #1**      **Description:** CARE committee will coordinate lighting for building and alleyways with NSP and IBEW. SSCO will develop plan for fencing between buildings.

**Resources Committed:**

**NRP:** \$30,000

**Other:** -----

**What Was Done:** individuals interested in funds applied to the safety committee. Many of the request were passed onto other organizations because their requests were eligible for other funding, specifically NSP nightwatch for lighting.

**Results Achieved:** lighting and fencing has been increased in the neighborhood, although much of it has not been paid for through the NRP. A process (included documents) was established to handle requests and other resources, organizations and funding, were identified.

**When: ?**

**Resources Used:**

**NRP:** \$3,319 to date

**Other:** NSP nightwatch program

**Number of Participants:** \$14 application paid out on 2

**Was strategy implemented?** completely

**If "partially" or "not at all," why?** only change = requests handled by safety committee verses CARE (does not exist)

**Is additional implementation scheduled to occur?** yes, ongoing

**Has the objective been accomplished?** yes



Should more be done? yes, going

## Strategy Assessment Report

**Neighborhood:** Stevens Square/Loring Heights

**Plan Section:** Community Safety

**Goal #1**      **Description:** provide a safe and healthy environment and increase social stability.

**Objective #6**      **Description:** establish a police storefront station

**Strategy #1**      **Description:** open a police substation on the 1800 block of Nicollet Avenue

**Resources Committed:**

NRP: -----

Other: \$5,000/years for

**What Was Done:** a police substation was established/opened on E. 19<sup>th</sup> St. It houses police, 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. block club meeting place, block patrol headquarters, meeting place for block officers, housing inspectors have access.

**Results Achieved:** facility allows the block patrol and other crime prevention activities to take place.

**When:** Spring 1994

**Resources Used:**

NRP: ----

Other: private support via free rent

**Number of Participants:** accessible to 50 – 75 people @ any given time

**Was strategy implemented?** completely

**If “partially” or “not at all,” why?** only change was in location, E 19<sup>th</sup> vs. 1800 Nicollet block; used to be SSCO office

**Is additional implementation scheduled to occur?** no

**Has the objective been accomplished?** yes

**Should more be done?** no

## Strategy Assessment Report

**Neighborhood:** Stevens Square/Loring Heights

**Plan Section:** Community Safety

**Goal #1**      **Description:** provide a safe and healthy environment and increase social stability

**Objective #7**      **Description:** install alarm systems in public housing and provide security guards

**Strategy #1**      **Description:** MPHA will install security systems at 1707 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave and 1920 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. involving key card access and safety cameras. CARE program to be initiated at 1707.

**Resources Committed:**

**NRP:**

**Other:** MPHA & CARE budgets

**What Was Done:** alarm systems were installed at MPHA buildings at 1707 and 1920. Security guards are utilized at the buildings; guards are on duty 16 hours/day at 1707 through contracts with RMC and Avalon for 8 hours each; 1920 has guards at inconsistent times

**Results Achieved:** the added security measures have established a more secure living environment. Security cameras were also installed. Between the security, alarms, cameras and remodeling, there has been a very noticeable difference at 1707 and 1920 has also improved.

**When:** 1995

**Resources Used:**

**NRP:**

**Other:** MPHA funds

**Number of Participants:**

**Was strategy implemented?** partially

**If "partially" or "not at all," why?** partial because security guards are not on duty 24 hours/day.

**Is additional implementation scheduled to occur?** no

**Has the objective been accomplished?** yes

Should more be done? no

## **Strategy Assessment Report**

**Neighborhood:** Stevens Square/Loring Heights

**Plan Section:** Community Services

**Goal #1**      **Description:** economic and social stability

**Objective #1**      **Description:** coordinate educational and social services

**Strategy #1**      **Description:** a community services coordinator will be hired by Loring Nicollet Bethlehem Center to develop a social service plan.

Implementation will be the responsibility of the Central Hennepin Human Services Council

**Resources Committed:**

NRP: \$30,000

Other: \$20,000 from LNB

**What Was Done:** the plan was contracted with LNB and directed by a steering committee. An existing SSCO staffperson (at the time) served as the community services coordinator.

**Results Achieved:** the plan was completed and addressed four main objectives: coordination of educational and social services; determination of youth activity priorities; determination of community service priorities; and exploration of the feasibility of a community resource center.

**When:** 1996 plan completed

**Resources Used:**

NRP: \$30,000

Other: \$20,000 LNB

**Number of Participants:** 4 steering committee members

**Was strategy implemented?** completely

**If "partially" or "not at all," why?**

**Is additional implementation scheduled to occur?** no

**Has the objective been accomplished?** yes

**Should more be done?** no

## **Strategy Assessment Report**

**Neighborhood:** Stevens Square/Loring Heights

**Plan Section:** Community Services

**Goal #1**      **Description:** economic and social stability

**Objective #2**      **Description:** determine youth activity priorities

**Strategy #1**      **Description:** community services coordinator hired by Loring Nicollet Bethlehem Center to develop a social service plan. Central Hennepin Human Services Council responsible for implementation.

**Resources Committed:**

NRP: \$30,000

Other: \$20,000 LNB

**What Was Done:** a common social services plan was developed which addressed youth activities. The plan determined youth priorities should be addressed within the context of the larger employment program.

**Results Achieved:** within the employment/jobs project, a focus was put on working with families and youth from those families. In attempting to serve youth, found it was difficult to find the youth in the neighborhood. LNB/SSCO with Central Village/Way to Grow to do outreach but they never made enough inroads with families or youth to be successful. Resources were then directed to the jobs project and serving low to moderate income adults. A Minneapolis Foundation grant supported the efforts directed toward youth, after the grant expired, resources were redirected.

**When:** 1996 plan completed; youth focus through June 1997

**Resources Used:**

NRP: \$30,000

Other: \$20,000 LNB, Minneapolis Foundation funding

**Number of Participants:**

**Was strategy implemented?** completely

**If "partially" or "not at all," why?**

**Is additional implementation scheduled to occur?** no

**Has the objective been accomplished?** yes

**Should more be done? no**



## Strategy Assessment Report

**Neighborhood:** Stevens Square/Loring Heights

**Plan Section:** Community Services

**Goal #1**      **Description:** economic and social stability

**Objective #3**      **Description:** determine and fund community service priorities

**Strategy #1**      **Description:** a community services fund will be created for community service priorities; the CARE approach will be utilized

**Resources Committed:**

**NRP:** potential use of the contingency fund

**Other:**

**What Was Done:** a plan was developed which determined the primary community service goal to be enhancing economic security for the least well-off residents of the community. To accomplish this goal the plan recommended committing available resources to the development of an employment, training and job placement program.

**Results Achieved:** a jobs program has been established at SSCO. The primary strategy has been to utilize neighborhood job fairs to connect neighborhood resident to jobs. Internship and apprenticeship components have been added as well as work with a Somalian interpreter.

Most of the jobs program work is contracted out by SSCO to RMC and LNB. Most focus is on "world of work"/soft skills training with more hard skill training programs still to be explored

**When:** 1996 plan completed, jobs project ongoing

**Resources Used:**

**NRP:** \$54,250

**Other:**

**Number of Participants:** 37 job placements

**Was strategy implemented?** completely

**If "partially" or "not at all," why?**

**Is additional implementation scheduled to occur?** yes, ongoing

Has the objective been accomplished? yes

Should more be done? no

## **Strategy Assessment Report**

**Neighborhood:** Stevens Square/Loring Heights

**Plan Section:** Community Services

**Goal #1**      **Description:** economic and social stability

**Objective #4**      **Description:** feasibility study of a community resource center

**Strategy #1**      **Description:** feasibility of a community resource center will be addressed through the development of the common social services plan

**Resources Committed:**

**NRP:** eligible use of the contingency fund

**Other:**

**What Was Done:** a common social services plan was developed which addressed the issue of a community resource center

**Results Achieved:** the plan determined a community resource center should not be pursued for two main reasons: 1) financial resources should be focused on enhancing economic opportunities versus developing a center; 2) ongoing operating costs – financial resources would have to be secured to cover these costs

**When:** 1996 plan completed

**Resources Used:**

**NRP:**

**Other:**

**Number of Participants:**

**Was strategy implemented?** completely

**If “partially” or “not at all,” why?**

**Is additional implementation scheduled to occur?** no

**Has the objective been accomplished?** yes

**Should more be done?** no

## **Strategy Assessment Report**

**Neighborhood:** Stevens Square/Loring Heights

**Plan Section:** Community Services

**Goal #1**      **Description:** economic and social stability

**Objective #5**      **Description:** explore feasibility of resident management activities of 1707 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue building

**Strategy #1**      **Description:** CARE program will help 1707 residents organize. An application will be submitted, with MPHA, to HUD for Resident Management Technical Assistance Funds.

**Resources Committed:**

**NRP:** \$20,000

**Other:** \$40,000

**What Was Done:** RMC applied to HUD for technical assistance funds. Ten of 17 RMC board members completed training, three attended HUD conference. They received a two part training: 1) training in rules, regulations and guidelines of HUD; and 2) economic development training to create programs, develop and manage programs, and secure funds.

**Results Achieved:** As a result of training, RMC is the only public housing management corporation in Minnesota that is recognized by the federal government. RMC has a better understanding of the rules, regulations, and guidelines and greater ability/skills in economic development. \$100,000 was received from HUD.

As a result of the training, a jobs and training program was established. The program applied to the McKnight Foundation for funding. Through Dec. 31, 1995, 125 individuals placed in jobs paying at least \$7.50/hr and benefits. A follow-up in the fall of 1998 indicated 75 percent retention with 25 percent of the individuals moving up to higher paying jobs.

An economic development work plan was developed to involve residents in resident management activities and other jobs outside RMC.

**When:** fall 1995 funding applied for; training completed fall 1997

**Resources Used:**

**NRP:** \$20,000 from contingency

**Other:** \$100,000 HUD funding

**Number of Participants:** 10-15 in training, 125 job placements

**Was strategy implemented?** completely

**If "partially" or "not at all," why?**

**Is additional implementation scheduled to occur?** no

**Has the objective been accomplished?** yes

**Should more be done?** no, the jobs program that has developed is ongoing

## Strategy Assessment Report

**Neighborhood:** Stevens Square/Loring Heights

**Plan Section:** Community Environment

**Goal #1**      **Description:** develop a neighborhood master plan

**Objective #1**      **Description:** conduct a land use study

**Strategy #1**      **Description:** a master plan project team will be formed with representatives from various neighborhood, city and state organizations. The team will oversee the neighborhood plan project.

### **Resources Committed:**

**NRP:** potential use of the contingency fund

**Other:**

**What Was Done:** master plan and study, directed by the project team, were done for Nicollet Avenue. Work was done by Barton Aschman Associates in association with representatives from the Architectural Alliance and the Urban Consulting Group

**Results Achieved:** see Nicollet Avenue streetscape improvements, goal #2 objective #5

**When:** study approved 1994

### **Resources Used:**

**NRP:** \$60,000 from contingency fund, additional \$24,000 from Loring Park

**Other:**

**Number of Participants:**

**Was strategy implemented?** completely

**If "partially" or "not at all," why?**

**Is additional implementation scheduled to occur?** no

**Has the objective been accomplished?** yes

**Should more be done?** no

## **Strategy Assessment Report**

**Neighborhood:** Stevens Square/Loring Heights

**Plan Section:** Community Environment

**Goal #1**      **Description:** develop a neighborhood master plan

**Objective #2**      **Description:** conduct a comprehensive traffic parking study

**Strategy #1**      **Description:** a master plan project team will be formed of representatives from neighborhood, city and state organizations. The team will oversee the study.

**Resources Committed:**

NRP: potential use of contingency fund

Other:

**What Was Done:** master plan and study were completed under the direction of the Nicollet Avenue project team. Work was done by Barton-Aschman Associates in association with the Architectural Alliance and Urban Consulting group.

**Results Achieved:** see Nicollet Avenue streetscape, goal #2 objective #5

**When:** study completed 1994

**Resources Used:**

NRP: \$60,000 from contingency fund, \$24,000 from Loring Park

Other:

**Number of Participants:**

**Was strategy implemented?** completely

**If "partially" or "not at all," why?**

**Is additional implementation scheduled to occur?** no

**Has the objective been accomplished?** yes

**Should more be done?** no



## Strategy Assessment Report

**Neighborhood:** Stevens Square/Loring Heights

**Plan Section:** Community Environment

**Goal #1**      **Description:** develop a neighborhood master plan

**Objective #3**      **Description:** conduct a streetscape and landscaping study

**Strategy #1**      **Description:** a master plan project team will be formed of representatives from neighborhood, city and state organizations. The team will oversee the study.

**Resources Committed:**

NRP: potential use of contingency fund

Other:

**What Was Done:** master plan and study were completed under the direction of the Nicollet Avenue project team. Work was done by Barton-Aschman Associates in association with the Architectural Alliance and Urban Consulting group.

**Results Achieved:** see Nicollet Avenue streetscape, goal #2 objective #5

**When:** study completed 1994

**Resources Used:**

NRP: \$60,000 from contingency fund, \$24,000 from Loring Park

Other:

**Number of Participants:**

**Was strategy implemented?** completely

**If "partially" or "not at all," why?**

**Is additional implementation scheduled to occur?** no

**Has the objective been accomplished?** yes

**Should more be done?** no

## Strategy Assessment Report

**Neighborhood:** Stevens Square/Loring Heights

**Plan Section:** Community Environment

**Goal #2 Description:** enhance physical structures through safe and suitable housing and infrastructure

**Objective #1 Description:** create a greening fund

**Strategy #1 Description:** objectives will be implemented through the master plan

**Resources Committed:**

**NRP:** \$30,000 originally

**Other:**

**What Was Done:** funds were reallocated so the greening fund had access to \$47,000. The funds were used to purchase plants, rakes, gloves, shovels, wheelbarrows, other tools, supplies and materials.

**Results Achieved:** acquired necessary tools and supplies; 20-25 boulevard beds were created throughout the neighborhood; the garden next to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Market was cultivated. Funding also helped fund the reconstruction of the grotto.

**When:** 1993-94

**Resources Used:**

**NRP:** \$47,000

**Other:**

**Number of Participants:** 15-20/year, 90-120 total

**Was strategy implemented?** completely

**If "partially" or "not at all," why?**

**Is additional implementation scheduled to occur?** yes, ongoing

**Has the objective been accomplished?** yes

**Should more be done?** no

## Strategy Assessment Report

**Neighborhood:** Stevens Square/Loring Heights

**Plan Section:** Community Environment

**Goal #2**      **Description:** enhance physical structure and desirability of the neighborhood

**Objective #2**      **Description:** place additional trash containers around neighborhood

**Strategy #1**      **Description:** objectives will be implemented through the neighborhood plan

**Resources Committed:**

**NRP:** \$10,000

**Other:**

**What Was Done:** trash containers are currently in the process of being ordered

**Results Achieved:** still pending/in process

**When:** 1999

**Resources Used:**

**NRP:** approximately \$6500

**Other:**

**Number of Participants:** 8-10 on environment committee

**Was strategy implemented?** pending

**If "partially" or "not at all," why?**

**Is additional implementation scheduled to occur?** Yes, ongoing

**Has the objective been accomplished?** pending

**Should more be done?** Yes, in process; leftover funds may be used for other litter-related efforts

## **Strategy Assessment Report**

**Neighborhood:** Stevens Square/Loring Heights

**Plan Section:** Community Environment

**Goal #2**      **Description:** enhance physical structures and neighborhood desirability

**Objective #3**      **Description:** window boxes for buildings on Third Avenue

**Strategy #1**      **Description:** objectives will be implemented through the neighborhood plan

**Resources Committed:**

**NRP:** originally \$10,000

**Other:**

**What Was Done:** funds were reallocated so \$0 funds were available for the window boxes project

**Results Achieved:** nothing to date

**When:**

**Resources Used:**

**NRP:**

**Other:**

**Number of Participants:**

**Was strategy implemented?** not at all

**If "partially" or "not at all," why?** the funds were reallocated away from the window boxes

**Is additional implementation scheduled to occur?** no

**Has the objective been accomplished?** no

**Should more be done?** yes, some residents have indicated they would like to see the window boxes pursued

## Strategy Assessment Report

**Neighborhood:** Stevens Square/Loring Heights

**Plan Section:** Community Environment

**Goal #2**      **Description:** enhance physical structures and desirability of neighborhood

**Objective #4**      **Description:** centralize trash, recycling and snow removal

**Strategy #1**      **Description:** objectives will be implemented through the neighborhood plan

**Resources Committed:**

**NRP:**

**Other:**

**What Was Done:** there were discussions about having one trash removal company and one snow removal company to help eliminate parking problems; will be difficult because it requires the coordination of property owners

**Results Achieved:** nothing to date

**When:**

**Resources Used:**

**NRP:**

**Other:**

**Number of Participants:**

**Was strategy implemented?** not at all

**If "partially" or "not at all," why?** community member said the objective is something that is "not going to happen;" it is just very difficult to coordinate and enforce

**Is additional implementation scheduled to occur?** no

**Has the objective been accomplished?** no

**Should more be done?** yes, potentially could help clean up the neighborhood, but is very difficult

## **Strategy Assessment Report**

**Neighborhood:** Stevens Square/Loring Heights

**Plan Section:** Community Environment

**Goal #2**      **Description:** enhance physical structures and desirability of the neighborhood

**Objective #5**      **Description:** streetscape improvements for Nicollet, Franklin, Third and Fourth Avenues

**Strategy #2**      **Description:** implemented through the neighborhood plan, working with the Capitol Long Range Improvement Committee within Public Works

**Resources Committed:**

**NRP:** \$313,000

**Other:** \$471,000 bonds

**What Was Done:** all of the funding was redirected to focus only on Nicollet Avenue. A project team was created to address the issues of the avenue, member from Loring Park and Whittier neighborhoods were also included and Minneapolis Public Works. Two different consultants were utilized for the land use plan and drawings.

The specifics included widened sidewalks, new lampposts and lighting, banners, railings, and road resurfaced.

**Results Achieved:** The specifics mentioned above. Provided continuity and unity to the street. Lighting, trees and railing created visible changes to create a constant theme.

**When:** started spring 1997, some work still in progress

**Resources Used:**

**NRP:** \$313,000 from SSCO and \$175,000 from Loring Park

**Other:** \$800,000 MCDA CDBG funds, MN State Aid, \$4.0 million assessed to property owners

**Number of Participants:** 15-20 from various neighborhoods on team

**Was strategy implemented?** partially

**If "partially" or "not at all," why?** all funding was reallocated to Nicollet

Avenue

**Is additional implementation scheduled to occur?** yes

**Has the objective been accomplished?** partially

**Should more be done?** yes, ongoing as a special service district created with a committee to oversee

## **Strategy Assessment Report**

**Neighborhood:** Stevens Square/Loring Heights

**Plan Section:** Community Environment

**Goal #2**      **Description:** enhance physical structures and neighborhood desirability

**Objective #6**      **Description:** construct park plaza overlook along 17<sup>th</sup> St.

**Strategy #3**      **Description:** the master plan will explore construction with attention to landscaping lighting, landscaped sound attenuation, seating and viewing platform and I-94 corridor landscaping

**Resources Committed:**

NRP: \$100,000

Other: \$164,000 net debt bonds

**What Was Done:** additional funds were reallocated to the project to total \$125,000. The funds were used to construct a greenway and plaza overlook along 17<sup>th</sup> St. from 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. to LaSalle.

**Results Achieved:** the development dramatically changed the look of that corner of the neighborhood. Sidewalks, flowers and fencing was added. The project also leveraged additional city dollars for the greenway.

**When:** 1997-98 hardscaping, some landscaping still to do

**Resources Used:**

NRP: \$125,000

Other:

**Number of Participants:** 60

**Was strategy implemented?** completely

**If "partially" or "not at all," why?**

**Is additional implementation scheduled to occur?** yes, some landscaping still ongoing

**Has the objective been accomplished?** yes

**Should more be done?** no, just additional landscaping and clean-up work



## **Strategy Assessment Report**

**Neighborhood:** Stevens Square/Loring Heights

**Plan Section:** Community Environment

**Goal #2**      **Description:** enhance physical structures and neighborhood desirability

**Objective #7**      **Description:** improve bridges: Groveland, Nicollet, Third, LaSalle, First & Franklin Avenues

**Strategy #4**      **Description:** the neighborhood plan team will oversee with attention to decorative lighting covered walkways, bridgehead landscaping and general upgrade

**Resources Committed:**

**NRP:** \$75,000

**Other:** \$400,000 MNDOT

**What Was Done:** nothing to date

**Results Achieved:** nothing to date

**When:**

**Resources Used:**

**NRP:**

**Other:**

**Number of Participants:**

**Was strategy implemented?** not at all

**If "partially" or "not at all," why?** the funds were allocated so as to be used in conjunction with MNDOT funds. MNDOT intends to make improvements in the future, but has not yet done so and no timetable is set.

**Is additional implementation scheduled to occur?** yes

**Has the objective been accomplished?** no

**Should more be done?** yes

## **Strategy Assessment Report**

**Neighborhood:** Stevens Square/Loring Heights

**Plan Section:** Community Environment

**Goal #2**      **Description:** enhance physical structures and neighborhood desirability

**Objective #8**      **Description:** widen pedestrian walkways on Nicollet, Franklin and Third Avenue bridges

**Strategy #5**      **Description:** incorporate widening project with MNDOT bridge improvements that may occur within 5-10 years

**Resources Committed:**

**NRP:**

**Other:** \$1,125,000 MNDOT

**What Was Done:** nothing to date

**Results Achieved:** noting to date

**When:** 1993-present

**Resources Used:**

**NRP:**

**Other:**

**Number of Participants:**

**Was strategy implemented?** not at all

**If "partially" or "not at all," why?** to be incorporated with MNDOT improvements that have not yet occurred

**Is additional implementation scheduled to occur?** yes

**Has the objective been accomplished?** no

**Should more be done?** yes

## **Strategy Assessment Report**

**Neighborhood:** Stevens Square/Loring Heights

**Plan Section:** Community Environment

**Goal #2**      **Description:** enhance physical structures and neighborhood desirability

**Objective #9**      **Description:** improve park to become a horticultural and visitor attraction

**Strategy #6**      **Description:** Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board will submit Stevens Square Park improvements to the Capitol Long Range Improvement Committee

**Resources Committed:**

NRP: \$74,500

Other: \$74,500 net debt bonds

**What Was Done:** funds were reallocated, making \$67,500 available for the park. Construction included the building structure, pergola/arbor, toilet surround, metal toolbox. Lighting was added and plants were purchased and added.

**Results Achieved:** The park is better taken care of now; the park is used more and there is more community involvement with the park. It leads to less criminal activity.

**When:** 1993, planting ongoing

**Resources Used:**

NRP: \$53,500

Other:

**Number of Participants:** 60

**Was strategy implemented?** completely

**If "partially" or "not at all," why?**

**Is additional implementation scheduled to occur?** yes, some planting ongoing and funding still available for additional work

**Has the objective been accomplished?** partially, some additions and improvements would continue to add to the park

**Should more be done?** yes, some suggestions included adding a water system and

a chess table

## Strategy Assessment Report

**Neighborhood:** Stevens Square/Loring Heights

**Plan Section:** Community Environment

**Goal #2**      **Description:** enhance physical structures and neighborhood desirability

**Objective #10**      **Description:** study potential landscaping around the public high-rises, 1707 3<sup>rd</sup> and 1920 4th

**Strategy #7**      **Description:** neighborhood plan team will conduct a study

**Resources Committed:**

**NRP:**

**Other:**

**What Was Done:** greening work has been done around the high-rises.

Landscaping was completed, sod and rock was put in, the wall and area behind the building was cleaned up, and other general clean-up was conducted. Minneapolis youth spent a day working with residents on clean-up and art-related activities.

**Results Achieved:** created a clean, pleasant environment; got youth involved with the community; see also above.

**When:** 1995-1998

**Resources Used:**

**NRP:**

**Other:** MPHA funds

**Number of Participants:** 30-35

**Was strategy implemented?** completely

**If "partially" or "not at all," why?**

**Is additional implementation scheduled to occur?** no

**Has the objective been accomplished?** yes

**Should more be done?** no

## Strategy Assessment Report

**Neighborhood:** Stevens Square/Loring Heights

**Plan Section:** Community Environment

**Goal #2**      **Description:** enhance physical structures and neighborhood desirability

**Objective #11**      **Description:** transit plaza shelters at Franklin & Nicollet intersection

**Strategy #8**      **Description:** cooperative endeavor with Whittier Alliance, Plymouth Congregational Church, and Metropolitan Transit Commission

**Resources Committed:**

**NRP:** \$15,000

**Other:** \$15,000 MCTO

**What Was Done:** nothing to date

**Results Achieved:** nothing to date

**When:**

**Resources Used:**

**NRP:**

**Other:**

**Number of Participants:**

**Was strategy implemented?** not at all

**If "partially" or "not at all," why?** the funds were allocated for use with MCTO; MCTO has not gone forward with plans for the transit shelters/hubs

**Is additional implementation scheduled to occur?** yes

**Has the objective been accomplished?** no

**Should more be done?** yes

## **Strategy Assessment Report**

**Neighborhood:** Stevens Square/Loring Heights

**Plan Section:** Community Environment

**Goal #2**      **Description:** enhance physical structures and neighborhood desirability

**Objective #12**      **Description:** renovate alleyways into pedestrianways

**Strategy #9**      **Description:** master plan project team will oversee possibilities with attention to historic lighting, access barriers, "naming" of alleyways and plantings

**Resources Committed:**

**NRP:**

**Other:**

**What Was Done:** discussions were held with city staff/representatives and individuals from the public works department. The city would not commit to maintaining the cobblestone alleyways and public works said they had no funding to take on the project.

**Results Achieved:** determined alleyway preservation will not be handled/undertaken by the city.

**When:** 1994-95

**Resources Used:**

**NRP:**

**Other:**

**Number of Participants:** 5 individual SSCO boardmembers and staff

**Was strategy implemented?** not at all

**If "partially" or "not at all," why?** city officials/departments and public works were not able/willing to work with the neighborhood. The use of alleyways as pedestrianways is somewhat dependant upon lower level commercial development in some buildings; since this development has not happened, the objective has not been pursued

**Is additional implementation scheduled to occur?** no

**Has the objective been accomplished?** no

Should more be done? no



## Strategy Assessment Report

**Neighborhood:** Stevens Square/Loring Heights

**Plan Section:** Community Environment

**Goal #2**      **Description:** enhance physical structures and increase neighborhood desirability

**Objective #13**      **Description:** install historic alleyway lighting

**Strategy #10**      **Description:** lighting affixed to selected buildings, objective pursued in conjunction with community safety objectives

**Resources Committed:**

**NRP:**

**Other:**

**What Was Done:** some alleyway lighting has been done through the lighting and fencing program outlined in the community safety objectives. None of the lighting is historic. Historic lighting is not actually encouraged by that program since it is not as safe as traditional lighting due to the power and longevity of historic lighting. Historic lighting generally emphasizes decoration versus safety. Also discussions with the city, in regard to preserving historic alleyways, were not fruitful. As a result, historic alleyway lighting was not pursued.

**Results Achieved:** historic lighting has not been installed, but some lighting has been added to the alleys

**When:**

**Resources Used:**

**NRP:**

**Other:**

**Number of Participants:**

**Was strategy implemented?** not at all

**If "partially" or "not at all," why?** highlighted under "what was done"

**Is additional implementation scheduled to occur?** no

**Has the objective been accomplished?** no

**Should more be done?** no

## **Strategy Assessment Report**

**Neighborhood:** Stevens Square/Loring Heights

**Plan Section:** Community Environment

**Goal #2**      **Description:** enhance physical structures and increase neighborhood desirability

**Objective #14**      **Description:** construct an interstate gateway over I-94 between LaSalle and First Avenue bridges

**Strategy #11**      **Description:** a combination of city, county, state and federal funding would be necessary to make a reality

**Resources Committed:**

**NRP:**

**Other:**

**What Was Done:** some discussions were held regarding the costs and the possibilities of developing some type of land bridge/connection to downtown. Nothing has been done to date.

**Results Achieved:** nothing to date

**When:**

**Resources Used:**

**NRP:**

**Other:**

**Number of Participants:**

**Was strategy implemented?** not at all

**If "partially" or "not at all," why?** costs for such a project are substantial and the project itself is a huge undertaking

**Is additional implementation scheduled to occur?** no

**Has the objective been accomplished?** no

**Should more be done?** no, there is a desire by some neighborhood individuals to explore ways to minimize the "barrier" between downtown and Stevens Square created by I-94. The goal is to make the neighborhood appear more inviting and safe.

## Strategy Assessment Report

**Neighborhood:** Stevens Square/Loring Heights

**Plan Section:** Community Environment

**Goal #2**      **Description:** enhance physical structures and increase neighborhood desirability

**Objective #15**      **Description:** conduct a neighborhood cleansweep

**Strategy #12**      **Description:** CARE and CNAP will coordinate the project

**Resources Committed:**

**NRP:**

**Other:** existing budgets

**What Was Done:** a cleansweep is conducted each year in the spring. Focus is on picking up trash and litter and addressing related neighborhood clean-up issues. The event was established by the SSCO environmental committee.

**Results Achieved:** every spring the neighborhood has a community-wide cleaning. The event brings community members out and has generated interest in smaller area clean-ups – i.e. neighbors plan block/alley clean-ups on a more frequent basis.

**When:** annually, has been in existence since before the NRP, major cleansweep in conjunction with the Neat Streets program

**Resources Used:**

**NRP:**

**Other:** existing SSCO environment committee budget

**Number of Participants:** varies by year, 30-150 participants

**Was strategy implemented?** completely

**If "partially" or "not at all," why?**

**Is additional implementation scheduled to occur?** yes, ongoing

**Has the objective been accomplished?** yes

**Should more be done?** yes, ongoing

## **Strategy Assessment Report**

**Neighborhood:** Stevens Square/Loring Heights

**Plan Section:** Community Development

**Goal #1**      **Description:** provide implementation support for plan activities

**Objective #1**      **Description:** hire staff to implement activities

**Strategy #1**      **Description:** community development staff will be hired by SSCO; responsible for loan/grant funded projects

**Resources Committed:**

**NRP:** \$49,859

**Other:**

**What Was Done:** funds were reallocated, making \$49,859 available for community development implementation activities. Staff through these funds for three years. Staff helped implement activities, particularly work on Nicollet Avenue and the management of the loan/grant funds.

**Results Achieved:** activities managed by staff were able to expand with additional staff. Having an individual dedicated to development work full-time allowed for greater impact.

**When:** 1993-1996

**Resources Used:**

**NRP:** \$49,859

**Other:**

**Number of Participants:** 1 staffperson

**Was strategy implemented?** completely

**If "partially" or "not at all," why?**

**Is additional implementation scheduled to occur?** no

**Has the objective been accomplished?** yes

**Should more be done?** possibly, duties handled by the NRP-funded development staff were reassigned to the executive director and community organizer positions when the funding ran out; there is currently no full-time staffperson solely dedicated to development activities

## Strategy Assessment Report

**Neighborhood:** Stevens Square/Loring Heights

**Plan Section:** Community Development

**Goal #1**      **Description:** provide support for implementation of plan activities

**Objective #2**      **Description:** procure SSCO office space

**Strategy #1**      **Description:** secure a new office location that is handicap accessible

**Resources Committed:**

NRP: \$14,000

Other:

**What Was Done:** new, handicap accessible space was acquired at a few different locations. Funds were used for rent and operating expenses for three years.

**Results Achieved:** SSCO was able to move into a few new spaces, one of which is now the current police substation and block patrol headquarters. SSCO was able to pay for office space without utilizing funds needed for other projects. The funding allowed SSCO to find a space appropriate for its needs.

**When:**

**Resources Used:**

NRP: \$14,000

Other:

**Number of Participants:**

**Was strategy implemented?** completely

**If "partially" or "not at all," why?**

**Is additional implementation scheduled to occur?** no

**Has the objective been accomplished?** yes

**Should more be done?** no

## Strategy Assessment Report

**Neighborhood:** Stevens Square/Loring Heights

**Plan Section:** Community Development

**Goal #1**      **Description:** provide support for implementation of plan activities

**Objective #3**      **Description:** study the feasibility of a CDC and provide monetary contingency

**Strategy #1**      **Description:** feasibility study will be undertaken by SSCO and MCDA to determine the organizational and financial requirements; areas of ownership, management, marketing ad construction will be examined

**Resources Committed:**

    NRP: \$14,000

    Other:

**What Was Done:** funds were reallocated, making \$4141 available for the study. The feasibility study was conducted by Richard Krier.

**Results Achieved:** a CDC was found to be not feasible as a result of the study

**When:** 1994-95

**Resources Used:**

    NRP: \$4141

    Other:

**Number of Participants:**

**Was strategy implemented?** completely

**If "partially" or "not at all," why?**

**Is additional implementation scheduled to occur?** no

**Has the objective been accomplished?** yes

**Should more be done?** no

## Strategy Assessment Report

**Neighborhood:** Stevens Square/Loring Heights

**Plan Section:** Community Development

**Goal #2**      **Description:** increase neighborhood desirability as a place to live

**Objective #1**      **Description:** design and implement a marketing program

**Strategy #1**      **Description:** a public education/communications campaign will be initiated. A formal RFP process will be conducted.

**Resources Committed:**

NRP: \$70,000

Other: \$35,000 private funds

**What Was Done:** funds were reallocated, making \$56,000 available for the marketing program. Padilla Spear Beardsley was hired to develop the marketing program.

**Results Achieved:** marketing materials were developed in the basic form of a neighborhood guide/brochure. This guide also included information about the Loring Park community. Copies are sold to property owners and assumably distributed to residents.

**When:** 1996

**Resources Used:**

NRP: \$37,817

Other:

**Number of Participants:**

**Was strategy implemented?** completely

**If "partially" or "not at all," why?**

**Is additional implementation scheduled to occur?** no

**Has the objective been accomplished?** partially

**Should more be done?** yes, funding is still available and some individuals have indicated the Stevens Square neighborhood was not sufficiently highlighted in the materials.

## Strategy Assessment Report

**Neighborhood:** Stevens Square/Loring Heights

**Plan Section:** Community Development

**Goal #2**      **Description:** increase neighborhood desirability as a place to live

**Objective #2**      **Description:** continue publications of *Neighbors* newspaper

**Strategy #1**      **Description:** SSCO will be responsible for *Neighbors*; the paper will be self-reliant after nine months.

**Resources Committed:**

NRP: \$13,500

Other:

**What Was Done:** funds were reallocated, making \$27,500 available for *Neighbors*. The paper was published for three years, approximately two years utilizing NRP funds. The paper folded because funding was dwindling and continuing on advertising alone was overwhelming. Continuing the paper was also challenging because it went through a series of editors.

**Results Achieved:** the paper got individuals involved in the community. It created a stronger interest in the neighborhood and served as a medium for neighborhood news.

**When:** 1992-1995

**Resources Used:**

NRP: \$27,500 – some still under contract, but not used

Other:

**Number of Participants:** up to 71 over the 5 years

**Was strategy implemented?** partially

**If “partially” or “not at all,” why?** the paper was published for some time, but was never self sufficient

**Is additional implementation scheduled to occur?** no

**Has the objective been accomplished?** no

**Should more be done?** yes, funding under contract is still available and neighborhood residents expressed and interest in a neighborhood news medium.



## **Strategy Assessment Report**

**Neighborhood:** Stevens Square/Loring Heights

**Plan Section:** Community Development

**Goal #3**      **Description:** strengthen Nicollet's commercial core and provide flexibility for the future

**Objective #1**      **Description:** establish a flexible revolving loan/grant loan guarantee fund

**Strategy #1**      **Description:** MCDA and a local bank will administer; SSCO, the businesses association and the MCDA will establish eligibility guidelines and criteria

### **Resources Committed:**

**NRP:** \$500,000

**Other:** \$1,000,000 loan pool from local bank

**What Was Done:** program guidelines were established to 1) provide loans at 3 percent up to a period of 10 years, and 2) guarantee up to 85 percent of the loan. Money has been spent to write down interest rates and cover 1 defaulted loan.

**Results Achieved:** 14 loans have been administered through the fund. One borrower said the program has been very useful and was utilized to make improvements in the neighborhood because the structure of the program made it useful. The borrower said the program is not useful because it is cheaper to borrow on the private market at higher interest rates for shorter time periods. He said he would not go to the NRP loan pool to borrow money today. Another borrower said the amount of work and the type of work that was done was greatly affected by the availability of funds. This individual's original plan was to do a smaller renovation, but the funds allowed for further rehabilitation. "We would not have done the rehabilitation to the extent that we did without the loan program, available funds." He said although interest rates are down and accessibility to funds is improved, the program is still necessary and effective. Particularly with neighborhoods on the edge, this program is necessary. "It provides money that would otherwise not be available." This borrower said some of the money could or should specifically target Nicollet Avenue. He said some could serve as grant money also, but that it is important to keep the funds returning to the fund so as to keep an ongoing resource.

**When:** 1993-present

**Resources Used:**

**NRP:** \$184,822 unrecoverable funds

**Other:**

**Number of Participants:** 9 borrowers

**Was strategy implemented?** completely

**If "partially" or "not at all," why?**

**Is additional implementation scheduled to occur?** yes, ongoing

**Has the objective been accomplished?** yes

**Should more be done?** yes, ongoing

Some individuals have suggested developing two loan programs, one directed at existing businesses and directed at attracting businesses. Others also suggested reviewing the structure of the program in light of the current market and interest rates. Restructuring was also suggested to eliminate the opportunity for "non-recoverable" funds.

## **Strategy Assessment Report**

**Neighborhood:** Stevens Square/Loring Heights

**Plan Section:** Community Development

**Goal #3 Description:** strengthen Nicollet's commercial core and provide flexibility for the future

**Objective #2 Description:** acquire or clear blighting properties

**Strategy #1 & 2 Description:** 1) MCDA will acquire and rehabilitate the Van Dusen property upon identification of an anchor tenant/owner; 2) demolish 1727-29 LaSalle and determine use/future of 1809 LaSalle.

**Resources Committed:**

**NRP:** \$300,000

**Other:** \$1.4 million in bond financing

**What Was Done:** a private, residential tenant was found for the Van Dusen mansion. The property was purchased and rehabilitated. A business, a floral shop, was established in the carriage house portion of the property. Allocated funds were utilized and an additional \$250,000 was provided through the commercial and residential loan programs. Both LaSalle properties were demolished.

**Results Achieved:** the rehabilitation of the Van Dusen stabilized the future of a historic, unique neighborhood property. The Van Dusen was one of the first visible projects of the NRP and was seen as a neighborhood success and turning point. Both strategies eliminated blighting properties.

The Van Dusen was unique because the objective was envisioning the property as a commercial reuse project, instead monies were given to an individual. This was controversial, but apparently occurred because community members saw the value of preserving the building since it was such a visible, prominent site.

**When:** 1994, Van Dusen

**Resources Used:**

**NRP:** \$300,000, and \$250,00 in loan funds

**Other:** private funding

**Number of Participants:**

**Was strategy implemented?** completely

If "partially" or "not at all," why?

Is additional implementation scheduled to occur? no

Has the objective been accomplished? yes

Should more be done? no

## Strategy Assessment Report

**Neighborhood:** Stevens Square/Loring Heights

**Plan Section:** Community Development

**Goal #3**      **Description:** strengthen Nicollet's commercial core and provide flexibility for the future

**Objective #3**      **Description:** rehabilitate and construct parking facilities

**Strategy #1**      **Description:** MCDA will work with the Minnesota Council of Churches to fund a parking ramp.

**Resources Committed:**

**NRP:** \$75,000

**Other:** \$900,000 MCDA Bond Financing

**What Was Done:** nothing to date

**Results Achieved:** nothing to date

**When:**

**Resources Used:**

**NRP:**

**Other:**

**Number of Participants:**

**Was strategy implemented?** not at all

**If "partially" or "not at all," why?** the objective was envisioned as necessary in light of expected commercial development with the Van Dusen. Since this did not occur, the project has not moved forward. Also, the Council of Churches has not shown any interest in pursuing the project.

**Is additional implementation scheduled to occur?** no

**Has the objective been accomplished?** no

**Should more be done?** yes, parking remains a neighborhood issue

## Strategy Assessment Report

**Neighborhood:** Stevens Square/Loring Heights

**Plan Section:** Community Development

**Goal #4**      **Description:** provide safe and suitable housing

**Objective #1**      **Description:** encourage home ownership and construct new housing

**Strategy #1**      **Description:** utilize existing MCDA loan programs; MCDA & SSCO will sponsor housing fairs; neighborhood plan will consider residential redevelopment projects; reallocation from the neighborhood's rental rehabilitation loan/grant program will be considered for development options.

**Resources Committed:**

**NRP:**

**Other:** existing programs

**What Was Done:** no formal action was taken to pursue this objective or related strategies. Housing fairs were not conducted. Information received by SSCO about MCDA programs was passed on to residents via the *Neighbors* publication.

**Results Achieved:** new construction and home ownership have increased in the community, but can not be attributed to these strategies because they were not employed.

**When:**

**Resources Used:**

**NRP:**

**Other:**

**Number of Participants:**

**Was strategy implemented?** not at all

**If "partially" or "not at all," why?** no specific reason

**Is additional implementation scheduled to occur?** no

**Has the objective been accomplished?** partially, see "results achieved"

**Should more be done?** no

## Strategy Assessment Report

**Neighborhood:** Stevens Square/Loring Heights

**Plan Section:** Community Development

**Goal #4**      **Description:** provide safe and suitable housing

**Objective #2**      **Description:** rehabilitate the Stevens Community Associates' properties

**Strategy #1**      **Description:** NRP funds will be used for HUD mandated work orders and security improvements. Status reports will be provided to SSCO and repaid funds will be placed in the Rental Rehabilitation Loan/Grant program.

**Resources Committed:**

NRP: \$500,000

Other:

**What Was Done:** money was provide as a loan to do specific rehabilitation required by HUD and to be paid back in five years. After five years, the project was not projected to be at cashflow and therefore the loan was refinanced as a deferred loan for 30 years. The entire exterior of the buildings were painted. Painting and other problems in common areas were also addressed. Code violations were corrected. Specific focus was put on the corner of LaSalle and Groveland.

**Results Achieved:** SCA is the largest property owner in the neighborhood and therefore improvements affected a large number of neighborhood residents. The properties now have no outstanding code violations and the LaSalle/Groveland corner is a "totally different" corner. SCA staff said there has been a change in how neighborhood residents react and see the properties. The funding also allowed SCA to develop a positive relationship with the city. SCA was able to use the NRP funding to leverage additional public dollars for the \$3 million project. The project won an award for the most creative financing.

**When:**

**Resources Used:**

NRP: \$500,000

Other: MCDA, HUD, MHFA, FHF, Limited partners – to total \$2.5 million

**Number of Participants:** 12 buildings, 99 units

**Was strategy implemented?** partially

**If "partially" or "not at all," why?** the loan has been refinanced on a much longer term. The repaid funding will not be able to be utilized in the residential loan program in the near future.

**Is additional implementation scheduled to occur?** yes, some work still being done

**Has the objective been accomplished?** yes

**Should more be done?** no



## Strategy Assessment Report

**Neighborhood:** Stevens Square/Loring Heights

**Plan Section:** Community Development

**Goal #4 Description:** provide safe and suitable housing

**Objective #3 Description:** establish a community rental rehabilitation loan/grant program

**Strategy #1 Description:** MCDA will administer the program; SSCO, SAMOA & MCDA will develop eligibility guidelines and criteria.

### **Resources Committed:**

**NRP:** \$1,525,000

**Other:** \$250,000/year for 5 years MCDA HOME funds

**What Was Done:** the program was originally approved like the commercial program, with a guaranteed interest rate for a set timeframe. The program was redesigned in January 1997 as a blended rate program with 70-80 percent of the principal coming from the program funds at 0-1 percent and the additional 20-30 percent coming from a private bank at prime.

**Results Achieved:** no projects were turned down. One borrower said the program was terrific and well-structured and served the purpose at the time, but does not work today because it is cheaper to borrow on the private market. This individual was referring to the program before the restructuring.

**When:** 1993-present

### **Resources Used:**

**NRP:**

**Other:**

**Number of Participants:** 25 loans made, confidential as to number of individuals

**Was strategy implemented?** completely

**If "partially" or "not at all," why?**

**Is additional implementation scheduled to occur?** yes, ongoing

**Has the objective been accomplished?** yes

**Should more be done?** yes, ongoing

## Strategy Assessment Report

**Neighborhood:** Stevens Square/Loring Heights

**Plan Section:** Community Development

**Goal #4**      **Description:** provide safe and suitable housing

**Objective #4**      **Description:** establish a mortgage refinancing program

**Strategy #1**      **Description:** MCDA and SAMOA will assess the needs of neighborhood property owners; MCDA will work with HUD, Fannie Mae, and other agencies to develop a mortgage refinancing program

**Resources Committed:**

**NRP:**

**Other:** up to \$5 million necessary from other agencies

**What Was Done:** MCDA and MHFA put together a proposal which was brought to SSCO and rejected. The project was voted down because the guarantee requirement relied on money needed from other programs and the MHFA requirements and underwriting was strict. Property values had also gone up in the neighborhood so it was easier to refinance properties on the private market.

**Results Achieved:** the neighborhood was already more stable so the program was not as necessary.

**When:** ?

**Resources Used:**

**NRP:**

**Other:**

**Number of Participants:**

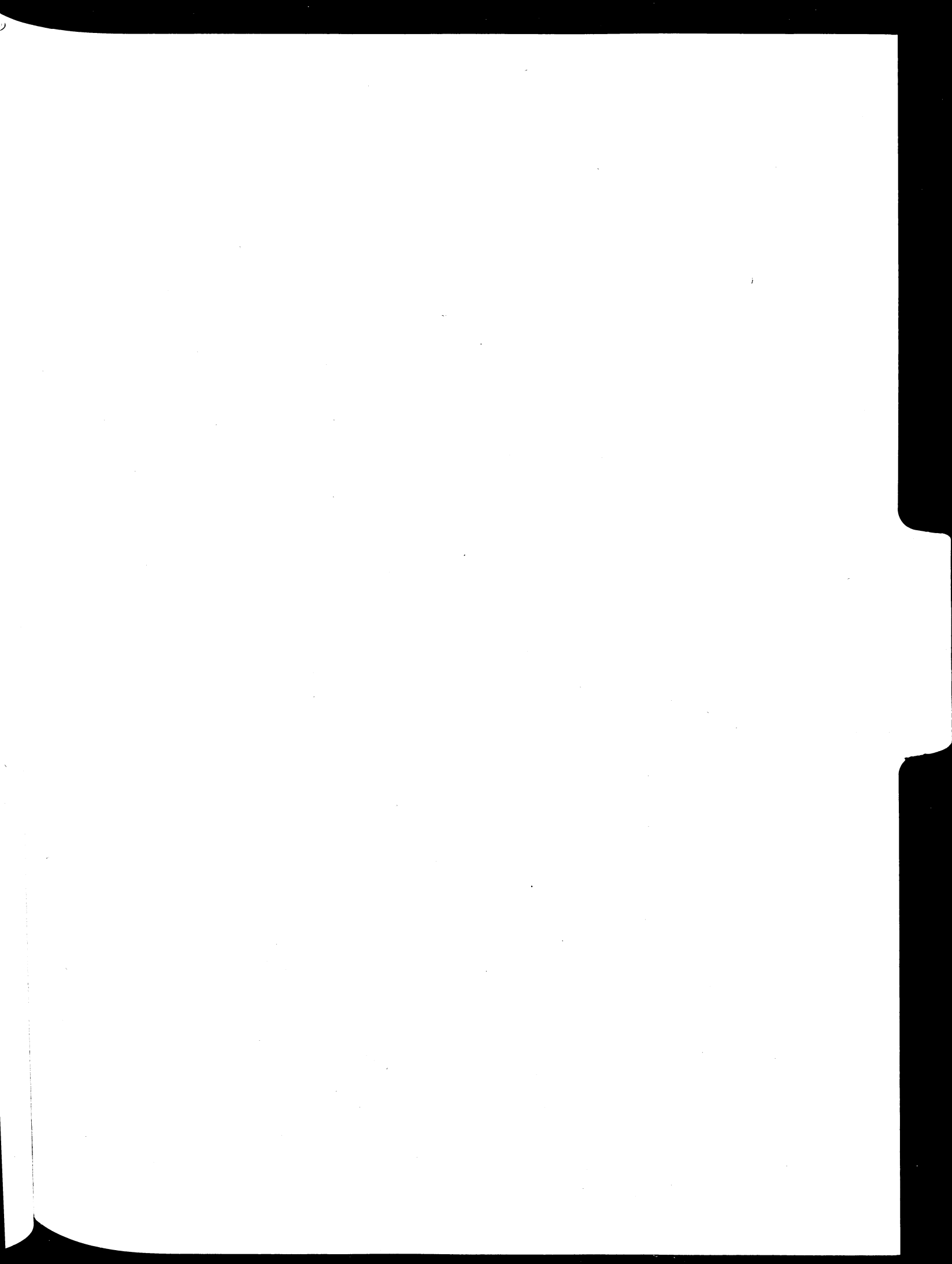
**Was strategy implemented?** completely

**If "partially" or "not at all," why?**

**Is additional implementation scheduled to occur?** no

**Has the objective been accomplished?** no

**Should more be done?** no



## **Stevens Square Community Organization NRP Assessment & Evaluation Interview Questions**

### Background

1. What was your role in the NRP process?
2. What was your understanding or impression of the NRP before the process began in Stevens Square?
3. How did you think the NRP would impact the neighborhood? What benefits did you foresee? What problems?

### Impact & Results

1. Five years later, what are your impressions of the NRP's impact in the Stevens Square neighborhood? Best things? Worst things? Surprises? Disappointments? Challenges? Try to think in terms of both direct results as well as the process.
2. What did you think of the NRP process? Was it fair or biased?
3. What do you think are the biggest indicators of change?

### Planning Ahead

1. As SSCO possibly anticipates the next round of the NRP, what would you do differently, both in terms of the types of objectives outlined and the process utilized to achieve those objectives?
2. What issues currently confront the neighborhood?
3. How can and should the NRP and SSCO address these issues?

## Interview Summaries

### NRP Evaluation Interview

Interviewee: Becky Moyer

#### Background

1. Moyer has been involved with SSCO as a boardmember for several years, she has served multiple times as secretary and also worked with the housing and development committee.

She was involved in all phases of the NRP process, although not necessarily in any specific leadership capacity. She said she attended all meetings throughout the process.

2. Moyer said the NRP laid out the logistics and objectives of the NRP pretty well prior to actually beginning the planning process. She said neighborhood residents were "well informed" about the program through the kickoff meeting. Moyer said, however, being provided the information about the process and actually doing it were "two different things."

3. As for expected impacts, Moyer said it is "important to distinguish between illusion and reality" as far as what the NRP could accomplish. For example she said, "she had immediate hopes for eliminating crime, etc.," but the reality was "the money[NRP] was a boost to make the community better, but we will still have those issues." Crime was the only specific issue that Moyer responded to as far as expectations.

Moyer said, "NRP money can't be a lifeline, but that is where the focus starts" for many organizations. She said there was an expectation/illusion that there would be so much money to use, but when you start breaking it down there is not as much as there appears to be.

#### Impact & Results

1. Moyer said a big benefit of the NRP "could be" more involvement and communication between SSCO and agencies such as HUD and MCDA. She said some of that has happened, but not enough. For example, HUD recently sold a property in the neighborhood to individuals with records of drug-related offenses. She there is one element of these partnerships missing - "Are agencies living up to their end of the mission? Are they attuned to what we[the neighborhood] are trying to do?"

She said the "most strenuous" part of the process was dealing with the money; setting priorities as to how to spend the money.

She said the process has "created a closer knit community. It created a more involved community. There was something to do, to work on, a mission." She said more citizens were involved during the NRP than there are now because the appeal/cause was different. "It is different just going to a meeting than having a mission."

The NRP also "gave the neighborhood a sense that someone cares;" that the government and other officials were in fact concerned about what was happening to the neighborhood. It gave the neighborhood the sense that it "will survive challenges."

She said the program had "no major failures," but the neighborhood had to just understand the "distinction as to what the money can do." With current projects, Moyer said the standard/habit is to look to NRP funds to support the project. She said NRP money is a "good supplementary" to the organization's other money. She said NRP money can also help because it helps the organization to receive matching funds from other sources.

2. -----

3. Moyer said the biggest indicators of change to her are the 1) developments in the park, including the trellis and the greening projects, 2) greening projects in general 3) the Nicollet Ave streetscape.

#### Planning Ahead

1. In the first round of the NRP "a lot of the projects undertaken related to beautification and smaller projects; now we need to look at what will sustain the neighborhood." In doing this, she said "[increased] businesses and crime become big issues."

2. Moyer cited the following current neighborhood problems:

- Need for more businesses - it is hard to get money/funding; the neighborhood needs access to more lending institutions; specific businesses needed/wanted include restaurants, a pet store, a drug store and grocery store; current businesses need more advertising and support.
- Crime issue - will always be an issue because of the location; there is a need for more screening by landlords; the block patrol could use more funding, perhaps even paying volunteers.
- Community events - organized community events should continue because "the more you know about your neighborhood, the more you will look out for your neighbors and the neighborhood;" increased identification with the neighborhood will also create less turnover.

3. -----

NRP Evaluation Interview  
Interviewee: Dee Tvedt

Background

1. Tvedt was involved with SSCO before the NRP began. She served as chair of the board from 1991-93 and wrote the organization's application to NRP. Once the program began, in her capacity as chair, she served on the coordinating committee and attended all sector meetings and multiple other meetings.

2. As for her impression of the NRP she said, "Those who were on top of things, at the city, etc., were really excited about it and I trusted their judgement. We knew there were a lot of opportunities to create our own things."

3. Benefits Tvedt anticipated included:

- safer neighborhood
- Nicollet Ave cleaned up and a better retail area, "a thriving commercial area"
- park improvements
- impact on housing - Tvedt said she did not have a real grasp on the housing related issues, but knew there were some financial issues and that some properties were particularly blighted

She said she was not concerned about problems related to the NRP until they "started to get into the process and realized the limits." She said she was concerned about how SSCO would/could handle the issue of prioritizing and not addressing some groups concerns/needs.

Impact & Results

1. Benefits:

Tvedt said an important benefit of the NRP was that the process developed leadership. She said it also created greater identity within the sectors. "We know ourselves better." A good example of how this happened is the block patrol. "NRP gave the block patrol the ability to upgrade," and the results are evident. Tvedt said there are more board members now that have been in block patrol than have ever been involved before. She said this is a positive because it "really gives them information about the neighborhood, literally, from the ground up."

Tvedt said the greening projects have also been very beneficial. "People were skeptical about gardening as a safety tool," but Tvedt said she was not surprised at its success. She said a former SSCO chair, Wendall Johnson, had turned her on to the idea and as he always said, "never underestimate the power of petunias."

Generally regarding the plan, "We started doing some innovative stuff that other neighborhoods began copying, both in terms of how their plans looked and in their process."

Negatives:

Personality stuff-

She said there has been some division within the neighborhood regarding the objectives that were pursued and which areas of the neighborhood were benefiting, specifically Loring Heights versus Stevens Square. She said some of that resentment,

regarding who gets access to the funding, "comes down to the individuals or companies that are taking advantage of the programs are the ones that have their act together to do it."

She said there was also some division during the planning process between the tenants and landowners, higher income versus lower income. "I think advocates for the lower income and no income [groups] felt like they were being hoodwinked." During the planning process there was, "an intellectual diversity that was not acknowledged, and that leads to suspicion and mistrust."

One thing that surprised Tvedt was "the antagonism of the community newspaper The Surveyor. The paper would not give SSCO free publicity and Tvedt said she found that very frustrating. She said the paper really had "a muckraking mentality."

2. Tvedt said the biggest frustration regarding the NRP process was that it was just too long. She also said the expectations regarding how much community involvement could and would be a part of the NRP process were frustrating. She said she felt the organization was receiving a lot of pressure and criticism that it did not deserve and that was not justified. She said SSCO made many efforts to get the word out to recruit people to get involved. Unfortunately, she said, SSCO could not ultimately control who got involved and those efforts needed to go both ways.

3. Indicators of change:

- people's comments - Tvedt said people are returning to the neighborhood saying it looks cleaner, feels better, etc.
- new investors - the number in housing and business properties
- the growth of SSCO - Tvedt said she is really surprised and the level of staffing that the organization now has. It has "more capacity to address systemic problems" through programs such as Restorative Justice.
- building of coalitions - for example through the work that was done on the Nicollet Avenue streetscape in bringing in two other neighborhoods.

### Planning Ahead

1. In the future, for SSCO projects, NRP or otherwise, Tvedt would suggest doing more door-knocking. She said it is also important for SSCO to get a newspaper so that it can publicize opportunities to get involved with the development and implementation of the NRP or other projects.

Tvedt said some of the objectives SSCO came up with through the NRP were "grandiose" but that they may still come through.

2. Future issues:

- build better retail area
- establish a base population, less transitional neighborhood

Things that were overlooked:

- the Avenue of the Arts and window boxes along 3rd Avenue
- covering the freeway
- community center



3. Tvedt said reconfiguring some housing units could help establish a base population. She said currently the units are too small to keep people in the neighborhood for too long. She said a population base is important to support a retail base.

NRP Evaluation Interview  
Interviewee: Gene Blackledge

Background

1. "I was only peripherally involved during the planning and early stages of the NRP. In the fall of 1994, I became more involved."
2. "I knew there was a big pot of money that everyone was wrangling over."
3. Blackledge said safety was a concern of his in the neighborhood and gardening was an interest. He saw that the NRP was an opportunity to combine the two.

Impact & Results

1. Benefits:

"Block patrol provides one of the best means for communication. It provides the best opportunity to meet people regularly, to get to know your neighbors and develop friendships, and to know what's going on."

He also said the greening program has really been a success in terms of the success of the projects and the level of interest by community members.

Negatives:

Blackledge said the neighborhood became divided, in some respects, positioning Loring Heights against Stevens Square. The LH group, particularly fueled by one individual (according to Blackledge), felt slighted by the lack of projects in their area. He said there was "some animosity or resentment by the LH that they were not getting things. But the reality was that they were in much better shape than some areas, they were less in need."

He said additional division was more pronounced in SSLH than it would be in many communities because there is so much rental property versus home ownership, and that more home owners would create more stakeholders.

2. (refer to division above) The division of parties was a problem. Stemming from that, he said he felt the publicity of the tenant paper was inaccurate and problematic.

3. Indicators of change:

- crime statistics and the neighborhood's increased ability to respond to situations
- increased property values, for example, apartment buildings for sale in the community have more bidders (2-3), more good landlords are interested and there are more that have already moved into the neighborhood.
- specific properties - Steve Frenz's property, it's a good mix of retail and white collar employment. "these types of development represent a significant investment in Nicollet Avenue and the neighborhood." Another example he said would be Acadia.
- Van Dusen mansion - the building had really been an eyesore, but now it's not only been restored, but has also brought in a business.

Planning Ahead

- 1.

2. "The biggest concern is bolstering the economic viability of Nicollet Avenue. There are lots of social services, but we need more beyond that. I would also like to see the neighborhood organization more proactive in economic development, specifically the grocery store."

Blackledge also said he thinks the neighborhood needs more step-up housing and more condominiums.

3. One idea Blackledge supports is establishing a neighborhood credit union that sets up a system of neighborhood currency. He also said SSCO should promote mixed-use development.

## NRP Evaluation Interview

Interviewee: Jim Larson

### Background

1. Larson has lived in the neighborhood since 1962 and has been very active during this time. Within the NRP process he said he served on the coordinating committee and worked with the real estate group. He helped raise money for the process by hosting coffees, etc.
2. Larson said he expected the NRP to be "another bureaucratic entailment, which it has been."
3. The way the NRP could impact the neighborhood, according to Larson, was through improved cleanliness, greenness, safety, snow plowing and trash removal. He said the role for the NRP was/could have been to impact "any issue that makes a demographic neighborhood a good place to be."

### Impact & Results

1. Larson said the benefits of the NRP were:

- "it provided an opportunity to meet a lot of people in the neighborhood, from business, institutions, property owners and landlords"
- "we learned there are people you can do business with and people you can't"
- "we learned he who stays the latest is the greatest winner"
- "we learned to organize and schedule"

"This is probably the best example of the NRP in the city," because the neighborhood has taken advantage of what was available, and the NRP process made that possible. He said the money made available to property owners and home owners have particularly been successful, but he also noted these individuals have access to private capital.

Challenges Larson cited were:

- the high turnover rate in the neighborhood, 72%, makes planning difficult. "There is no opinion that was rendered at the last meeting that is valid today."

Larson said the NRP enabled the neighborhood to have access to public funds, but they were very difficult to actually get to and to put to work in the neighborhood. He also said all neighborhoods are underfinanced and the money they were given was not enough. "We thought the NRP to be the silver bullet to shoot through the head of the monster, but then we realized the monster had 75 heads and we only had one bullet."

2. Larson said the NRP process in Stevens Square was run very well, everyone was invited and they made it easy to get involved.

On the broader scope, Larson said the concept of NRP is worthy, but it does not work successfully in all communities, particularly communities like Stevens Square.

"The concept of the plan is very good. It works in a neighborhood with many property owners. NRP provides a framework for these types of communities. But in our neighborhood with deterioration and socio-economic problems the NRP isn't the animal

to use to attack the problem. People don't have the vision or entrepreneurial or intellectual [ability] to do it."

3. Larson said factors that could be used as indicators of positive change within the neighborhood are:

- lower turnover rates in occupancy
- absence of late charges on rent
- the ability of property owners/landlords to run a building for profit
- reduction in police calls
- reduction in damage reports
- increased word-of-mouth referrals
- increased parents approval for new, younger residents
- ability of organizations and businesses to borrow money

Larson said some of these things are occurring in the neighborhood.

#### Planning Ahead

1. Larson said SSCO should ask for institutional participation, from banks, insurance companies, etc., when looking at future development strategies. He said their participation is important because they have major capital.

He said objectives should focus on employment, job creation and housing

2. Issues that need to be addressed presently are:

- cleaner streets and alleys
- better trash pick-up
- greener neighborhood
- improved neighborhood image
- increased capital in the neighborhood
- public acceptance of the neighborhood
- long-term development program
- use real estate for maximum real estate use and value
- crime
- political leadership

3. Larson said he thinks the NRP process would work better using private financing from banks and corporations. He said it would work more efficiently and more quickly if NRP funds were used to leverage private funds. "NRP has the obligation to serve as the lever to lift private sector money into neighborhoods."

According to Larson, important factor for successful development are community banks and developing a neighborhood that gets outsiders to come in.

## NRP Evaluation Interview

Interviewee: Jim Storm

### Background

1. Storm was involved with the planning process and served as a co-chair of the Nicollet Avenue Task Force.
2. He said he was familiar with the NRP goals and processes from the experiences of the Whittier neighborhood.
3. Storm said the neighborhood had problems with division between landlords and renters. He said "if there is[was] potentially a vehicle for finding common ground" between these groups the NRP was it.

Specifically he said he saw the NRP as an opportunity to create economic revitalization on Nicollet Avenue. An opportunity to pull together a conceptualization of what it could and should be.

### Impact & Results

1. Storm said he could not speak well to the impact the NRP has had and the changes it has caused in the Stevens Square community. During the planning process he was employed in the neighborhood, but left that position in 1995 and is currently not around the area too much. He said when he does drive through the area he can see that things are happening, particularly on Nicollet.
2. Storm said the biggest challenge to the NRP process was the "classic challenge" between property owners and renters. He said "moving beyond that polarization was a big issue/challenge." He said he thought the process ended up being fair; or at least he thought they tried to be fair in process. As for fair outcomes, he said he could not really say.
3. Storm said he thought an increase in the degree of stability of neighborhood residents would be a good indicator of neighborhood change. He said other factors may influence this variable, but to the extent which individuals would not leave the neighborhood for reasons other than outside the neighborhood is an important issue to note.

### Planning Ahead

1. Storm said he would not suggest doing anything differently in terms of the process utilized. He said "key efforts were made to hear people."
2. -----
3. -----

## NRP Evaluation Interview

Interviewee: Mansoor Alyeshmerni

### Background

1. Served as chair of the NRP process; was previously chair of SAMOA.
2. Alyeshmerni said he had a good understanding of the background and goals of the program because he had read the 20-year revitalization plan paper which preceded the program. What he said the paper told him was that "neighborhoods are always in flux and if we (community members) don't do something, our neighborhood is more likely to go down. To me it said that it was time to get involved."
3. The issues Alyeshmerni thought the NRP could address/benefit included: crime, deterioration of buildings, commercial area, neighborhood image.

He said he thought the biggest challenge of the program was that he felt inadequate as chairperson. He said he was "not sure how to go about making it (the program) work, how to develop a plan the neighborhood wants."

### Impact & Results

1. "It saved the neighborhood." Specifically, he said, the NRP funds gave property owners access to money they could borrow to make improvements. He said the work on Nicollet Ave was also very important.

He said the program was successful because the role of government was to help the private sector do what it needs to do. He said he thought SSCO did a good job because they were able to look at the long-term. The example he referred to was in regard to the funds available to property owners. He said at one point the plan was going to recommend to give property owners grant money for rehabilitation versus loans. He said SAMOA overruled this proposal because they "did not want to use the money for a one shot improvement that would then go to hell."

He said the most successful components of the NRP in Stevens Square are the improvements done to properties and the development of the 17th street overlook.

One weakness/disappointment of the process was that the neighborhood has not dealt with the issue of crime sufficiently, it has improved but not enough.

A couple of surprises that have resulted are 1) a unified community, particularly coming out of a community that was so un-unified and, 2) so many people became involved.

2. Alyeshmerni said the process was very fair. He said the process they used made it easier for individuals to get involved and made the process fair. The neighborhood was divided into sectors so individuals would not have to walk far to go to a committee meeting. Decisions were made by consensus versus majority rule. Alyeshmerni said he appointed leaders of the opposition to some of the chair positions, to much opposition. He said he did this because they were quality people and would do the best job and because it would help ensure that all view were well heard. Alyeshmerni said he thinks that was the best thing he did.

He said the process was long, but he "liked that because all kinds of groups could have taken advantage of the process otherwise. Because of the time we put in, we ended up with a unanimous plan. I don't regret the time that it took."

3. Alyeshmerni suggested a good way to determine indicators of change would be to utilize the same survey that was conducted just prior to the NRP process and then compare the results.

Other indicators of change are:

- the rehabilitation and improvement of properties,
- the increase of flowers in the neighborhood,
- the construction of the 17th St. overlook,
- improvements on Nicollet Ave.

Another important indicator is that the neighborhood has broadened the range of people who rent in the community. He said in the past the neighborhood was avoided by individuals of substantial income, such as doctors and lawyers, but now there is a greater mix of individuals.

#### Planning Ahead

1. For any future planning processes, Alyeshmerni said SSCO should use the same process. By utilizing some experienced volunteers and/or staff, the process could maybe even be done better and/or faster. He said their process listed every concern any community member or individual had, grouped them by category and had interested individuals address them.

2. Alyeshmerni said current issues facing the neighborhood include:

- improving problems related to crime
- upgrading and beautification
- litter
- parking

3. Alyeshmerni said, "so long as we have a strong SSCO and staff, issues will be addressed." He said his "biggest fear" during the time he was involved with the NRP was that "we would lose staff and go backward." He said a strong organizational structure is very important and this is something he considers a very strong point for SSCO to keep in mind into the future. He said you can tell the organization is staying strong because money is being returned from loans and staff are volunteers are staying around. He said this indicates stability. He said he thinks the city and NRP staff seeing this stability is important.

#### Misc.

Alyeshmerni said although economic conditions may be contributing to the success of the neighborhood, "even if the community was poor now, the quality of the neighborhood would not be there." Unfortunately, some of the individuals newer to the community may not be aware of that.



Alyeshmerni said he did not focus too much on the money aspect of NRP. He said what is important to do is "focus the energies of the city staff, it is not a money issue" to get things done.

NRP Evaluation Interview  
Interviewee: Guy Fischer  
Date: Nov. 9, 1998

### Background

1. Fischer was the NRP coordinator for the Stevens Square Loring Heights area during the majority of the NRP planning process and a significant portion of the implementation phase. This was a temporary SSCO staff position.
2. Fischer said he did not have much knowledge specifically about the NRP. He said what he did have was planning knowledge. In relation to SSCO this meant sitting back and listening to all the different groups, and all the different plans coming out of the sectors, and determining how that could all work together
3. Fischer said he thought what the NRP could do for the neighborhood was "whatever they(neighborhood residents) wanted, whatever their dreams were. I always used to say, 'until they(NRP/city) say no it's yes.'"

As far as specific benefits, he said there was always that "tension between bricks and mortar versus social services." He said many objectives had tensions within them, for example, issues related to historic preservation. Developers may have the objective to loosen restrictions so to have new development opportunities, while others may have the desire to preserve structures and areas.

### Impact & Results

1. Fischer said the Stevens Square Loring Heights NRP plan was "the best plan he'd seen, a blueprint for all other plans. I really think it was a watershed plan." He said the plan is truly unique in comparison to the plans produced by most neighborhoods. "It is a plan with so many visions and dreams left in it. Now plans are so functional." He said that component really made the plan more reflective of the neighborhood.

Specific benefits he cited were: the streetscape project and the Van Dusen mansion. He said the Van Dusen project was really one of the symbols of success for Stevens Square. He said "if that would have went, it would have been devastating for the neighborhood." The project was also "helped turnaround Loring Heights."

He said it was unfortunate that more money could not have been put into Stevens Park, but simply that there was just not enough money to do everything.. Overall, he said he thought Loring Heights got less money, but were more creative with financing, and the projects that succeeded in that area were more pivotal.

2. "To me the plan was the process, it was a pact that the neighborhood could agree on." Fischer said this process was challenging for several reasons. "We were kinda making it up as we went along, there was no template. There was so much diversity in terms of what people wanted." He said he thought "their intentions are very good, but there were so many people around the cookie jar."

Fischer said the work load associated with the process was unreal; there were 10-15 meetings per month. He said several women got very sick during the process due to the stress and pressure. He said a challenge for his was to keep it all together. He said it

seemed when things started working for the neighborhood they wanted to stop it. "It was like when the train started running down the track, they wanted to split the track." He said it was as if the neighborhood was so used to things not working that they weren't comfortable with a process that was working.

In the end, Fischer said he thought there was something in the plan for everyone. Fischer said minority opinions still made the plan; all ideas were given a voice. While the process took a long time, it was definitely fair.

3. "In terms of change, there is no other neighborhood with so much change in terms of bricks and mortar," said Fischer.

At the outset of the NRP process, Fischer said there was a feeling of urgency. He said people felt something needed to be done immediately to address the deterioration of properties and the neighborhood in general. If this urgency no longer exists in the neighborhood, that would be a great indicator of change, said Fischer.

Fischer also thought the fact that the neighborhood/SSCO finished what they started and were successful in developing and implementing a plan is an indicator of change. Previous plans had been developed, but never implemented, largely because there were no funds.

Fischer said, the NRP overall indicates a change in how neighborhoods were able to work. The NRP provided neighborhoods a stage, and the city had to listen. It enabled work and progress to be rooted in the simple language of neighborhoods and neighborhood residents, while working within the bureaucracy of the city.

#### Planning Ahead

1. Fischer said he would encourage SSCO and the neighborhood to "think big" in any future planning processes. For example, he said ideas like the interstate gateway are important because they could have huge implications for change. He also said, it may not be necessary to work with such attention to all groups within the neighborhood.

2. Would like to see more facade work

3.

NRP Evaluation Interview  
Interviewee: Tom Sawina

Background

1. Officer Sawina said he has consulted with the neighborhood organization for several years, since prior to the NRP process. During the NRP, Sawina said he helped with the safety committee and gave input to strategy development.

2. Sawina said he was familiar with the NRP from his own general knowledge.

3. Particularly because of his position, Sawina focused on the improvements in neighborhood safety and crime prevention that could result from the NRP process. For example, Sawina thought the process would provide access to funds and programs that would allow property owners to make some changes and improvements they would not have done on their own otherwise. He said programs such as the lighting and fencing program have done this.

He said he did not foresee any problems with the process because there was a system of checks and balances throughout the approval process.

Impact & Results

1. Sawina said he sees several improvements in the neighborhood, particularly related to crime and safety. These include:

- decreased drug dealing
- 0% vacancy rates, versus higher rates before
- organized property owners
- improvements in properties
- generally more thriving neighborhood

2. Sawina said from his perspective, it seemed there was good turnout and involvement by neighborhood residents. He said moving the meetings around and publicizing them well was important.

3. Sawina said several indicators suggest change:

- crime numbers are down over 50 percent; he said these numbers are accurate because there has been an emphasis on reporting
- the multiple buildings receiving facelifts
- increased flowering around the neighborhood, it boosts the neighborhood image
- good communication within the neighborhood

Sawina said the difference between SSLH and other neighborhoods is that SSLH got it all done. He said he has worked with neighborhoods that have not even been able to develop a plan, much less implement it. He said an important characteristic of SSLH success has been the leadership and determination of neighborhood residents, SSCO staff and boardmembers.

Planning Ahead

1. Sawina said SSLH is always touted as one of the best neighborhoods to work with. He said SSCO should always push for more renter involvement.

2. Sawina said SSCO/the neighborhood should continue to focus on what it is doing. He specifically said it is important to continue to work with property owners, particularly new property owners that may have not had an opportunity to participate.

He also said the neighborhood may want to increase work and focus on the Clinton Sector, particularly 3rd and 4th Avenues.

3.

Other comments:

Mpls. Police Inspector Johnson

"The Stevens Square community has become a community policing model as far as the communication level with the community."

## NRP Evaluation Interview

Interviewee: Elliot Pinck

### Background

1. In 1991 Pinck was approached by Mansoor Alyeshmerni to serve on the SSCO board. Pinck said he had been relatively inactive at the time, but decided to take the opportunity to get more involved with the community. He was elected at that time to serve as treasurer. He then served for treasurer for 3 years, the maximum term; served as assistant treasurer for one year; was reelected as treasurer for 3 years again and is not currently serving as.

Pinck said he was not very involved in the NRP process, although the planning was going on when he served on the board.

2. Pinck said he did not have a strong impression of the NRP because he was working on the "sideline." He said he did learn particularly learn about the program through the various financial reports for which he was responsible.

3. Pinck said he thought the NRP would impact the neighborhood in two ways.

- The NRP could provide funding for the day to day operations of the organization. At the outset of the NRP process, the organization lacked the funds that would allow them to grow. "It is a circular problem, without the funds, the organization can't get the people[staff]; but without the people[staff] you can't secure or recruit the funds."
- The NRP would also provide funding, through grants and loans, for local business people and property owners to improve the physical aspects of their properties. These improvements would in turn attract better tenants, housing and commercial.

Pinck said he did not really foresee any broad challenges, but on a personal level saw the accounting issues as a challenge.

### Impact & Results

1. According to Pinck, the biggest success of the NRP process was the development and establishment of a strong, viable neighborhood organization. An organization which is now able to support itself financially by obtaining outside grant monies from foundations and other organizations and agencies. NRP money enabled the organization to hire some key staff and grow from a part-time staff.

"The NRP provided that seed money which was the means by which SSCO was able to establish a strong community organization and foundation on which to grow. It is unbelievable what I have seen change."

Another important success of the NRP was that it caused people who work and live together in the community to work together to improve the community itself. It provided an opportunity to "acknowledge the talents and skills that exist in the neighborhood."

The process, and its results have also "improved the neighborhood's image in the greater metropolitan neighborhood."

Pinck said a disadvantage of the program is that it does not allocate money for an organizational audit. For a smaller organization this can be a challenge. Pinck said SSCO was granted additional funds for this.

2. Pinck said he could not comment on the process.

3. Pinck said the biggest indicators of change are:

- the Van Dusen mansion - the improvements on this property were important because it is "a visual, tangible change;" "it is a landmark."
- property owner improvements - many rental properties have seen major repair and change in appearance. "It makes the neighborhood look fresh and new."
- the increased participation of property owners - Pinck said this type of participation can lead to greater selectivity in tenants, which is really where "the future of the neighborhood lies."

"We were very, very successful in establishing monies that could be brought into the neighborhood or made available to industry and business in the neighborhood."

#### Planning Ahead

1. Pinck said he could not make any solid recommendations because he was not very familiar with the process previously.

2. Important issues facing the neighborhood include:

- the assured continuity of SSCO - Pinck said it is important that the community and SSCO are confident that the organization can survive. That there is assured financial support.
- improving the community's image in the overall community
- address litter and graffiti - Pinck said this is an important issue because it "creates negative thoughts." He said disincentives should be created to address the problem.

3. As for how to address neighborhood issues Pinck suggested several strategies:

- engaging property owners - Pinck said involvement with SAMOA should be necessary for property owners. In turn, it should be encouraged &/or necessary for SAMOA to have involvement in some capacity with the SSCO board.
- SSCO's financial stability - the organization should utilize a professional grant writer on a part-time basis. Pinck said it is important to have an individual that can facilitate the organization's ability to continue to obtain funds.
- community activities - community activities should be published broadly; it is important to inform the press and downplay the negative aspects of the community.
- curbing litter - educate the people who live here to encourage them to clean up their own properties. SSCO should sponsor neighborhood-wide clean-ups regularly to include the broad community and more public areas. Pinck also said more serious penalties should be enforced for graffiti culprits that get caught.

Other comments:

"I have been extremely impressed with the people in the community that have come forth to serve on the SSCO Board. I have found them to be very dedicated and willing to share knowledge, expertise and talent, and to devote tremendous hours of time.



NRP Evaluation Interview  
Interviewee: Karen Ives

Background

1. Ives got involved with the NRP process at the kickoff meeting. Through the kickoff meeting she got involved with her sector committee. The sector committee held meetings monthly, if not more. Initially attendance was high, but then dropped to a core group, say from 40 to 20. To get participation they would use surveys and special events. Through her sector committee she joined the coordinating committee, which was made up of reps from each sector totaling 20-25 people.

Ives said those who remained involved throughout the year and a half process, "either had a vested interest or just a general personal interest." She said her interest was personal, that she enjoyed working through processes. "I ended up being someone who could carry forward the vision of the plan by using consensus building processes, etc."

After becoming involved with the NRP, Ives became more involved with SSCO and joined the board and eventually chaired the board.

2. Ives said she was familiar with the NRP before it was introduced into the Stevens Square community. She said it was a "very new concept;" for a neighborhood to "decide its own direction, set priorities, have a grassroots impact." Ives said she thought "it was exciting and a good idea."

"What seemed so nice was anyone could participate and be involved. There was opportunity to come out and speak your mind and have an influence without having to run for office. And all of us did, we had tremendous influence in the destiny of this community."

3. Ives said she saw the NRP as "an opportunity to create a sense of place, sense of identity. I really didn't know how the money part would go, I had no concept of that, but I did see the advantage of creating a community." At the kickoff she said they were "told to be dreamers; what's your vision, don't worry about the money."

She said important on which she thought NRP would have an impact were: finding a tenant for the Van Dusen mansion because it was "very painful" to watch the property go downhill when Horst left; improvements on Nicollet Ave; and improving overall safety.

Impact & Results

1. Impacts:

- Van Dusen - "The turnaround is stunning. It has become a draw unique to our neighborhood, a landmark.." Ives also said the Van Dusen was "a tremendous success because it helped build a bridge between the two sides of the neighborhood."
- Nicollet Avenue - "went beyond my expectations. The attention to the avenue and the support to businesses are so crucial to drawing the neighborhood." She cited the Acadia cafe as a success story. She said closing the businesses that had occupied the avenue in the past was a positive change because they were largely hangouts for prostitutes and johns.

- Safety - The neighborhood has "made connections with the police that continue because it is an ongoing process. Just setting that foundation and keeping that going has been positive." She also said the movies and music events have been strong programs that have made a positive impact.

Ives said all these benefits "stemmed from neighborhood involvement and participation and the NRP started that."

One thing that surprised her about the NRP process was that it "took so long and was so labor intensive." Ives said as a coordinating committee member during the planning stages and as board chair during the initial implementation stages, she was constantly busy with NRP/SSCO projects.

2. Ives said the process "just wore people out, and maybe it's necessary and that's how you get things done. She said they had such "vibrant meetings," with a variety of individuals speaking their minds, the "agitated, eloquent, illiterate," etc.

"I believed in process and spirit and so that is what happened. I likened it to being mayor of a small town, it was intense," said Ives referring to her time as board chair. She said part of that may be unique to SSCO due to its election process, that each boardmember is elected by the community, so individuals were set to serve the community members.

She said the process was constantly a struggle to determine what was best for the neighborhood; there were individuals bringing vested interests to the table and so those became the issues. She said it was challenging to get organizations, groups and the public all involved.

3. Important benchmarks/indicators of change:

- Van Dusen - see above
- Safety - see above
- Nicollet Avenue - see above; still progress to be made on the avenue
- SSCO - "A huge surprise to me is that the organization is much stronger. I thought once the NRP money was gone the organization would struggle, but that has not happened. It has ended up really growing. I was surprised because I didn't think it[SSCO] would be able to attract foundation money and other monies." She also said the mood and atmosphere at meetings are so different now as compared to during the NRP process; things are much more positive now.
- Housing - Landlords are putting in the effort to get better tenants. SCA properties have stabilized and this groundwork through NRP "will have tremendous impact on the quality of housing."

Stereotypes - We were "successful in a large degree to changing perceptions[of the neighborhood], we're not all the way there, but there is momentum."

"This neighborhood has been a success. It wouldn't have happened without volunteers and city folks responding."

### Planning Ahead

1. Ives said it is important to build on what the neighborhood has started and has learned through experience. She said she would suggest:

- Be realistic - "Instead of being asked to dream, NRP/SSCO should tell community members to be more directive as to what are the needs of the community."
- Build consensus - "I think the method of building the plan by brining groups to consensus was a marvelous thing." Future planning should act on a level of consensus.
- Collaborate - "Don't duplicate efforts, build connections between neighborhood and within."
- Staff - It is important to have good staff. We "don't want a staff that drives the process, but you certainly need one that supports it." A staff with appropriate skills to prove internal support is important. External support is also important.
- Time frame - The planning process could be shorter. Some requirements regarding reporting to NRP committees, etc., could be centralized.

2. Current issues:

- Commercial hub - still has major weaknesses, the Laughing Cup building structure, the hole in the ground, need evening establishment/bar etc.
- Social environment - has continual issues, important to have resources available
- Housing - Landlords are not using the available rehab monies.

3. Methods:

- no more studies
- Movies & Music is good, community activities
- website development
- commercial business development
- marketing/PR to combat image

NRP Evaluation Interview  
Interviewee: George Roehrdanz

Background

1. Roehrdanz said he was involved with the planning process at the outset, but began having some real problems with two or three of the apartment owners. "It turned by stomach to the point where I didn't go to anymore meetings." Roehrdanz said he stopped going to meetings but remained in tune to what was going on through neighborhood communication. He said he did become re-involved somewhat, primarily with projects NRP did in the area of his home, the Loring Heights sector, such as the townhomes.

2.

3. Roehrdanz said he thought the program held great promise initially, but he was very skeptical at the outset. He was concerned about the interests of the apartment owners who initially had "collective mouths watering at the potential funds for their benefit. However, Roehrdanz said, "I've basically become a believer in it. The programs, with one or two exceptions, have been good and the funds well spent."

Roehrdanz said he was most skeptical about the basic concept of transferring the planning process from the so-called "professionals" in city hall, to amateurs within a neighborhood with many factions.

Impact & Results

1. Roehrdanz said he believes for the most part, the NRP has been beneficial, a good process and good programs. He said the undue influence that he perceived initially by apartment owners in Stevens Square really faded. Fortunately, he said, that influence never developed to the degree that it could have. In addition, a broader spectrum of individuals participated.

Roehrdanz though the 17th Street Overlook was a waste of money. He said the area between LaSalle and Nicollet was set to be redeveloped anyway. Roehrdanz said the type of development that has been done for this project will be difficult to maintain.

2. He said he thought the process was fair, characterized by broad representation.

3. Several specific projects he mentioned as indicators of change were:  
townhouse project - after 30 years of effort to develop in this area, work has been done. Roehrdanz said he believes the development is "magnificent for the immediate neighborhood."

Van Dusen mansion - would have never gone forward without NRP funds  
Nicollet Avenue streetscaping

Planning Ahead

1. Could not speak much to the process because he was not very involved.

2. Roehrdanz said there should be greater emphasis on stabilizing the neighborhood through incentives to apartment owners and homeowners to improve their buildings and

property. He said the long-term viability of the neighborhood will be dependent upon this.

He also said there needs to be an emphasis on improving the business environment. He said funds must be available to the owners of businesses and business properties. He said an improvement in the business environment will impact all other neighborhood issues.

3.

NRP Evaluation Interview  
Interviewee: Bert Berlowe

Background

1. Berlowe lived in the Stevens Square neighborhood for about 12 years, between 1981-93. He was active on the board and other SSCO committees. He was involved with the sector committees that were developing the NRP plan.

2. Berlowe said there was some discussion about when Stevens Square should get involved with the NRP. There was some concern as to if the organization and the neighborhood were ready. In relation to that, there was some question about the track record of the NRP. Since it was so new, there was not really a track record for the program, and what track record existed was questionable.

3. Berlowe hoped the NRP could generally improve the neighborhood's crime problems and appearance issues.

Berlowe said he foresaw problems with neighborhood unity, particularly problems between the property owners and tenants.

Berlowe said the neighborhood had seen "a lot of very controversial [SSCO] board elections." A group of individuals that was concerned about issues of representation started the Stevens Square Tenants Union. The organization's mission was to get more involvement from tenants and to make sure tenants had a greater voice in the things going on, as related to the NRP and otherwise.

Berlowe said another issue of concern was "who was going to get the money after the initial plan was developed."

Impact & Results

1. The neighborhood was divided politically and philosophically. Tenants in the community felt they were not adequately represented versus the property owners who were very well represented, both on the board and the various committees. The issue of representation throughout the process was a very big challenge.

The major controversy that developed throughout the NRP was not so much issues-related as it was participation-related.

"We felt that the main issue was that there had not been adequate representation from the different groups that existed in the community, and not just the tenants versus the property owners, but the various racial and economic groups."

"The idea was to try to involve as many people as possible, but we felt that never happened. [We felt] that the decisions were primarily made by a small group of special interest decision-makers, particularly property owners." Berlowe said in relation to the board and committees racial composition, there was also very little representation of the neighborhood's diversity.

Berlowe said the feelings were so strong among these individuals and groups that a complaint about the SSCO process was filed with the city. The complaint asked that the Stevens Square NRP plan be "squashed and started over." The goal was to have individuals that were usually left out of the process get involved. "We wanted that language that addressed more specifically how that involvement was going to happen."

The result of the city's review was that some elements of the plan were looked at closer, the organization and planning committees needed to "rethink some portions." Some effort was made to put different wording into the plan, specifically focused on citizen participation. Berlowe said that type of review and recommendation was a first for the NRP at that time.

"This became more important than the issues, but the issues then became important as related to these participation issues." Berlowe said the participation piece really affected how the money was going to be spent and what the priorities were going to be.

Berlowe said some important positive results of the process included the improvements along Nicollet Avenue and the improvements made in the park. He said there also was "the impression that the level of participation in the neighborhood had moved forward, but then it ultimately moved back." Berlowe also said he thought the process "certainly did some good preserving low-income housing."

"NRP to a large degree has been very successful, but in some neighborhoods it was very contentious, and this was one of those neighborhoods."

2. (NRP process issues - see above)

"The NRP should be about letting the average guy have a voice; about having power structures be bottom-up versus top-down.

3. Berlowe said he thinks the number of people involved would be an appropriate indicator of change and/or success of the process. "The level of involvement really should be a litmus test to judge the success of the NRP." Berlowe said this type of monitor should not just look at the numbers of individuals involved, but also if that involvement is unified and if there is a balance of power and participation among groups.

"If you don't improve that [participation], then you might as well go back to the old system of the city making decisions."

In relation to resident participation and representation, "I don't think we were ever totally satisfied. We couldn't really put some number on it [participation and representation goals], but we did just to have some indicators to show the different levels of representation."

### Planning Ahead

1. Berlowe said the process created several "lessons learned" -

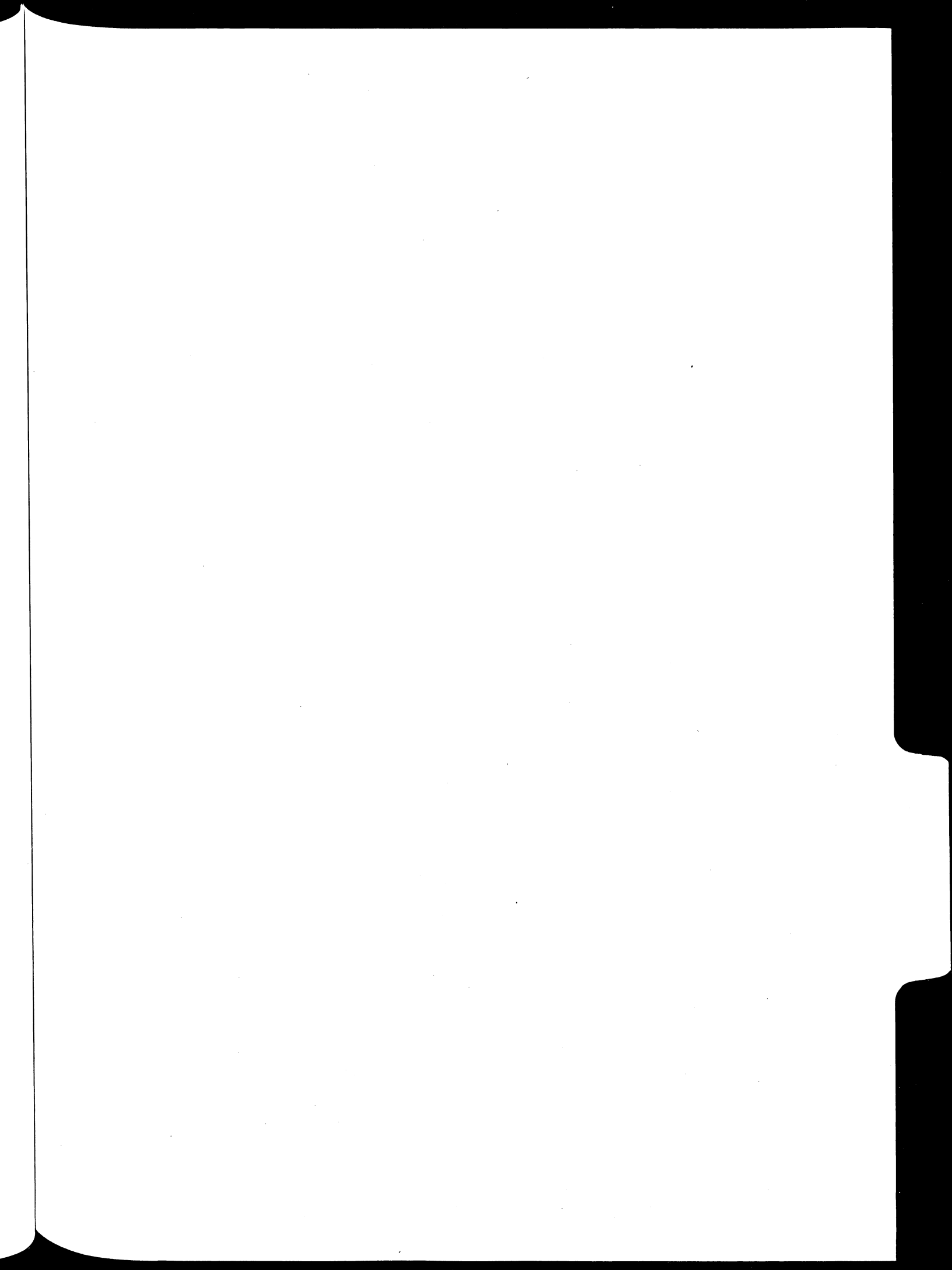
- In Berlowe's opinion, the neighborhood become involved too soon. The organization and the community were not organized enough and there was too much dissension/conflict that existed with the neighborhood.
- SSLH underestimated the difficulty of the process because there were no models to follow.
- The organization/neighborhood hastened to get involved because they thought they would "miss the boat" if they did not jump at the chance. As it turned out, SSLH could have waited some time and avoided some controversies.

2. Lack of awareness about projects and programs such as the NRP. During the NRP process, the Tenants Union surveyed residents, it was "surprising how many people did not know about the NRP."

Berlowe said it is important to recognize the potential influence of the NRP. Berlowe said he learned that "what the NRP was ultimately going to be used for was to determine what the image of the neighborhood was going to be." He said what the NRP really came down to was directing what the neighborhood was going to be like, who was going to live there and who was going to be involved in the decision-making for the neighborhood.

3. Berlowe suggested that SSCO evaluate what happened with the process after the complaints were filed with and addressed by the city. He said an evaluation would need to go back to look at the bottom line participation requirements and suggestions and see if what actually happened was good enough to get approved.





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## ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Regarding The

### STEVENS SQUARE-LORING HEIGHTS NRP PLANNING PROCESS

**Background:** While conducting its final review of the Stevens Square-Loring Heights NRP Action Plan on June 21, the NRP Implementation Committee was presented a complaint by Karl Cooper, a neighborhood resident. The complaint alleged that the Stevens Square Community Organization (SSCO) has not honored the letter or spirit of its participation agreement with the NRP. The complaint requested that the pending Stevens Square-Loring Heights Action Plan be rejected and "the NRP process be started over from scratch in Stevens Square/Loring Heights."

In response to Mr. Cooper's allegations, the Implementation Committee established a three person Administrative Review Team to assess the consistency of the Stevens Square-Loring Heights planning process with the requirements of the participation agreement between NRP and SSCO. The Team was directed to report its findings and recommendations to the NRP Implementation Committee.

**Team Membership:** The Administrative Review Team was comprised of the following members, each of whom has extensive experience and familiarity with the NRP program from either a jurisdictional or neighborhood perspective:

- Philip Eckhert, Director, Hennepin County Office of Planning and Development
- Merwyn Larson, Director, Inspections Division, Minneapolis Department of Regulatory Services
- Darlene Walser, Acting Director, Jordan Area Community Council.

#### Administrative Review Team Charge/Focus:

The Charge to the Administrative Review Team was to review the NRP planning process in the Stevens Square-Loring Heights neighborhood for consistency with the participation agreement between the NRP and SSCO. Specifically, this review will focus on activities and events undertaken to carry out the following :

- Pre-Workshop Organizing Phase
  - Publicity and Research
  - Organizing Strategies
  - Outreach
  - Issue Identification

## • Workshop Phase

- Stage I: Sector Plans
- Stage II: Neighborhood Plan
- Stage III: Plan Review

The review specifically excluded questions of plan content, political and governance issues of neighborhood organizations (election procedures and results, by-laws, etc.), and allegations of illegal activities or conflicts of interest from the scope of its review.

## Review Process:

The administrative review process consisted of the following steps:

1. A neighborhood meeting was held on Wednesday, July 7 to listen to concerns/complaints about the NRP process as managed by the SSCO and resulting in the Action Plan presently under consideration. Meeting participants expressed their concerns to the Team and submitted written testimony and supporting materials. The Administrative Review Team asked various questions of the participants to fully understand the nature of the complaints and relevant process history.
2. A second neighborhood meeting was held the following evening, Thursday July 8, to receive comments from participants/supporters of the recently completed NRP process in Stevens Square-Loring Heights. The Review Team questioned representatives of the SSCO about planning process activities and compliance with the terms of the participation agreement with NRP. The Team also received written materials and supporting information from SSCO members.
3. All participants at both meetings were advised of the opportunity to submit additional written materials for review until the end of business on Monday, July 12.
4. The Administrative Review Team met on two occasions during the week of July 12 to review the information presented at the meetings during the previous week and to discuss alternative courses of action. A draft report was subsequently reviewed, modified and finalized.

## Summary of Concerns

Approximately 20 persons attended the neighborhood meeting on July 7 to express concerns about the NRP planning process in Stevens Square. By the end of business on Monday, July 12, twenty letters and a half dozen other documents had been received by the Team. While the details of each set of comments and individual piece of correspondence varied, the concerns that were presented fell into the following categories:

1. The planning process did not yield a sufficient number of participants.
2. The planning process did not yield participants that were representative of the neighborhood. Women, minorities and renters were grossly underrepresented.
3. The provisions of the participation agreement relating to communications, outreach, volunteer recruitment, and a number of other elements were violated. The overriding concern in this regard was that the planning process was not adequately and uniformly extended to all residents.
4. The planning process was directed and controlled by property owners and business interests, many of whom are non-residents.
5. The NRP plan, if implemented, will principally benefit business and apartment owners, rather than residents in general, and could lead to gentrification and displacement.
6. Some residents that were early participants in the process found continuation difficult due to lack of information or an unwelcome atmosphere at meetings.
7. Proposals for assisting poor and disabled members of the community were systematically rejected by controlling factions.
8. The neighborhood survey conducted as part of the planning process was unprofessionally designed and conducted. Results were not accurately or fully reported or incorporated into the final plan.

#### Summary of SSCO Responses

Approximately 15 persons attended the neighborhood meeting on July 8. Representatives of the SSCO and plan proponents were asked a series of questions by the Administrative Review Team based on concerns expressed at the meeting the previous evening. The following is a summary of key points made in response to Team questions and statements made the previous evening:

1. Acknowledging that participant demographics did not mirror those of the neighborhood, extensive efforts were nevertheless made to notify neighborhood residents of NRP activities and results and to recruit participants and volunteers. Every neighborhood resident was notified of many opportunities to participate and made his or her own participation decisions. Every resident with any interest in the NRP planning process, or desire to participate in it, could not help but notice a variety of meeting announcements, progress summaries and other notices available throughout the neighborhood.

2. Renters are notoriously difficult to actively engage in neighborhood planning activities for a variety of reasons. This is true city-wide, not just in Stevens Square. However, because Stevens Square has a disproportionately high percentage of renters, and a higher turnover rate than the city average, the effect of low renter participation is magnified in Stevens Square.
3. The NRP made very limited funds available to support organizing, recruitment and public information activities. The SSCO made every effort to maximize the effective use of these funds through regular publication of Neighbors which contained monthly calendars of NRP and neighborhood events, volunteer solicitations, progress reports and drafts of key documents such as the preliminary plan and neighborhood survey results. Resident input was regularly solicited in response to published materials.
4. The participation agreement served as a target or activity "wish list" which the SSCO endeavored to fully accomplish but which was unattainable due to funding limitations. The organization is committed to implementing all elements of the agreement. As an example, efforts are continuing to secure private funds for the Welcome Wagon.
5. No grievances have ever been filed pursuant to the grievance process. Critics of the process have a responsibility to come forward early, to the SSCO or the NRP, rather than wait until the plan is prepared, requesting that it be returned to the neighborhood to begin again.
6. The SSCO consistently received support, encouragement and positive feedback from the NRP staff regarding the content and quality of its planning activities. The SSCO responded fully and promptly to every NRP requests for process enhancements such as jurisdictional review prior to plan submission and formal community approval.

## Findings

Upon full review and extended discussion of all verbal and written comments about the NRP process in Stevens Square-Loring Heights, the Administrative Review Team has arrived at the following findings:

1. All of the elements of the participation agreement were not carried out. Most elements, however, were fully or partially completed. Several were done in a manner that exceeded requirements.
2. SSCO efforts to communicate fully and frequently with neighborhood residents regarding NRP planning and activities and results through the Neighbors newsletter were reasonable and sufficient.
3. The NRP plan, and associated process, have clearly become a lightning rod in this neighborhood that is rife with acrimonious relationships.

4. Implementation of the participation agreement in Stevens Square-Loring Heights does not appear to have been adequately monitored by the NRP or have received sufficient financial and training support to ensure success. Any planning process deficiencies that can be identified at the end of the process clearly should have been identified and remedied much earlier. This responsibility is shared by the SSCO, the NRP and all neighborhood residents.
5. Some neighborhood residents clearly feel unwelcome, excluded and intimidated by the NRP process in Stevens Square-Loring Heights. It is less clear whether these perceptions indicate SSCO's failure to manage an inclusive planning process or the unwillingness of some residents to avail themselves of opportunities to participate in a dynamic neighborhood process. The truth probably lies somewhere in between.

Regardless of the causes or basis for such perceptions, it is incumbent upon the NRP process managers to ensure that all ideas are entertained, all interested parties are genuinely welcomed and a fair and open decision making process is followed. This goal can never be exceeded. In the case of Stevens Square, this goal was not as fully realized as in other neighborhoods.
6. The SSCO had no formal indication of concerns about its planning process, either from residents in the form of grievances or appeals or from NRP staff familiar with SSCO activities, prior to plan submission. To the contrary, feedback received was positive and requests for process refinements made by the NRP were favorably acted upon. Consequently, SSCO had no opportunity to resolve neighborhood concerns prior to plan submission.
7. The principal challenge has been to the planning process, not plan content. Participants in the July 7 meeting that expressed concerns about the process were divided on the question of whether to return the plan to the neighborhood or move forward with plan consideration and implementation.

#### Action Considerations

In preparing its recommendations, the Administrative Review Team considered three critical questions:

1. Did the NRP process in the Stevens Square-Loring Heights neighborhood adhere to the requirements of the participation agreement and generate representative and broad-based community support for the Action Plan?
2. If not, were reasonable actions taken by the SSCO to accomplish neighborhood participation objectives?

3. If process deficiencies occurred, did they have such a significant impact on participation and/or plan results as to warrant intervention prior to plan consideration by the NRP Policy Board? If so, what steps should be taken? The following alternatives were considered:

- Reject the appeal of the opponents and advance the plan to the Policy Board for action.
- Fully accept the assertions of opponents, set aside the action plan as infallibly flawed due to process errors, and direct the neighborhood to re-start the planning process from scratch, paying great diligence to the process requirements of the participation agreement and with close oversight by the NRP staff.
- Subject the plan to a community referendum managed by the NRP staff before advancing the action plan, if endorsed by the neighborhood, to the NRP Policy Board.
- Advance the action plan to the NRP Policy Board for consideration and recommend that process modifications be made by the SSCO in (a) plan implementation and (b) further plan development and refinement, to ensure that henceforth, all neighborhood elements have full notice and opportunity to participate in on-going plan development and implementation.

### Conclusions

- The SSCO did not fully implement the provisions of its participation agreement with the NRP, but it made many reasonable efforts to involve all segments of the community in the process.
- While the Stevens Square-Loring Heights planning process did not have as numerous and representative a participant group as desirable, there is no evidence that the resultant action plan disadvantages any particular neighborhood group.

### Recommendations

1. Based on the above conclusions, the Stevens Square-Loring Heights Action Plan should be forwarded by the Implementation Committee to the Policy Board for its consideration.
2. The Implementation Committee should also recommend to the Policy Board that the SSCO, with support from the NRP staff make appropriate modifications in the implementation process to ensure broader neighborhood participation in preparation of the Neighborhood Master Plan, the Social Services Plan and other elements where

further development is indicated. Such modifications might include provision for independent facilitation of planning sessions (to avoid conflicts that might arise from having "content advocates" also serve as "process managers"), greater availability of financial resources for advertisements and notices, and meeting management training for committee chairs.

3. The NRP staff should clarify that all neighborhoods are expected to carry out all activities described in the participation agreement. Neighborhoods wishing to include optional additional activities to be addressed as time and resources permit may do so, but such activities should not be confused with those that are required.
4. The NRP staff should more closely monitor neighborhood planning activities and compliance with cooperation agreements. Compliance issues should promptly be brought to the attention of the neighborhood organizations along with a request for appropriate remedial action. The Implementation Committee and Policy Board should receive periodic reports on neighborhood compliance with cooperation agreements.

## Discussion

The Neighborhood Revitalization Program is built on the belief that the stakeholders in each of the city's neighborhoods- - homeowners, renters, landlords, and businessmembers- - have the necessary knowledge, skills and commitment to come together to forge an ambitious vision and a practical plan for the future that, with the support of local government, can be transformed into reality. And while this belief has been affirmed in some neighborhoods, the NRP experience to-date demonstrates that success is neither swift nor easy. The planning process is extended and often confusing. People are busy. Things are constantly changing. Informal processes that often work best in neighborhoods don't easily generate formal plans. And, of course, people disagree: on what to do, and on how to do it.

The circumstances in the Stevens Square-Loring Heights neighborhood are particularly troubling because elements of a neighborhood are at odds with each other. The Implementation Committee of the NRP, predominantly government representatives, has been asked to assess the adequacy of the neighborhood's planning process and determine if the work conducted by neighborhood volunteers over the past year and a half should be put aside or modified. The Administrative Review Team has addressed this task with great care because two fundamental principles of the NRP are involved: the importance of open, representative neighborhood participation in the planning process and governments' commitment to respect and respond in good faith to the neighborhood visions for the future.

The NRP process is young, but well defined. The Stevens Square-Loring Heights action plan has been prepared pursuant to that process and is ready for review by the NRP Policy Board. Whatever action is taken by the Implementation Committee will not only affect the Stevens Square-Loring Heights plan, but also, by precedent, the plans and activities in other neighborhoods.



The recommendations are a pragmatic reflection of the fact that no neighborhood planning process will ever be flawless and that it is incumbent upon neighborhood residents and organizations to make its process work as effectively and inclusively as possible. Only in the most flagrant circumstances should bodies like the Implementation Committee or Policy Board intervene to reject a plan based on procedural considerations. We don't find the circumstances in Stevens Square-Loring Heights warrant such action. We would similarly urge the NRP staff to more closely monitor all neighborhood planning activities to ensure that process quality control occurs. Neither neighborhood organizations nor participating jurisdictions have the time or resources to convene Administrative Review Teams to examine alleged process irregularities.

The recommendations also recognize that the planning process in Stevens Square-Loring Heights is far from finished. Much work remains to be done in preparing the Neighborhood Master Plan and the Social Services Plan. Opportunities for participation from all elements of the neighborhood will be abundant. Now is the time to re-examine and refine the planning process such that there are no future allegations of exclusion from the process.

July 7, 1993

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I am writing to express concerns I have that the Stevens Square Community Organization (SSCO) has not honored the fact or spirit of the citizen participation agreement that it signed with the NRP. The "Pre-workshop organizing plan for the Stevens Square/Loring Heights Neighborhood Revitalization plan", which is Exhibit A to the Contract between the Minneapolis Community Development Agency (MCDA) and SSCO, sets forth various methods and strategies the SSCO claims it will utilize to facilitate participation of the citizens of the Stevens Square/Loring Heights community. (Copy attached).

The SSCO recognizes that "[r]eaching underrepresented groups, i.e., youth, renters and minorities, is a major challenge of the NRP." It claims that through "block club meetings and door-to-door canvassing" they hope to reach each person.

Do block clubs exist? I am not aware of a block club on my block.

If they do exist, when are the meetings? I have not seen any notices published in "Neighbors" or posted anywhere listing meeting times and places.

Has door-to-door canvassing occurred? I have not had anyone come to my door explaining the NRP process and/or inviting my participation.

The SSCO also claims that it has an Outreach Committee whose role is to obtain "input from every Stevens Square/Loring Heights neighbor." This Outreach Committee would also use door knocking on a block-by-block basis to obtain citizen input.

Does (or did) an Outreach Committee ever exist? In a listing of SSCO committees published in "Neighbors", the Volunteer Committee comes the closest in definition to an Outreach Committee, although it is far from outreach ("Volunteer Committee - Explores volunteer needs; recruits and rewards volunteers who respond to SSCO and community needs for volunteers.").

In response to concerns expressed about the lack of actively seeking citizen participation, the chair of this committee responded that a calendar of monthly meetings is published in "Neighbors". The calendar merely lists dates and times of committee meetings, with no explanation of what the committees are about, and there is no information given to encourage participation by members of the community who are not already participating in the process. It should also be noted that at the annual meeting (06/23/93) there was no Volunteer Committee report.

According to the agreement, the Outreach Committee would also contact landlords and encourage them to "set up meetings and to circulate information and surveys to their tenants" as that "is crucial to the success of this project."

If there was an Outreach Committee, did it do this? My landlord (who has been active in the NRP process) did not set up meetings to circulate information in our building.

As almost every landlord in the Stevens Square/Loring Heights neighborhood has been active in the NRP process, as a practical matter, it would appear that holding meetings within a landlord's building to disseminate information about the NRP process and/or to gather input from tenants would be a relatively simple task.

According to the agreement, the Outreach Committee would also provide a "Welcome Wagon" packet which would include a questionnaire and information on how to get involved to reach renters as they move in to the neighborhood.

Does such a "Welcome Wagon" packet exist? I have not seen one. I have also personally seen the apartment next door change over at least three times, and not one tenant has been informed about the NRP process in the neighborhood.

I do recognize that such outreach into the community is a very onerous task. However, one of the fundamental tenets of the NRP process is that it is a neighborhood plan developed by and for the community. According to the June 1992 issue of "Building Blocks", 80 people in the Phillips neighborhood canvassed 98% of 7,000 households as part of their pre-workshop organizing. That is outreach.

The NRP process is a mechanism which allows those people who do not readily have a voice in community decision-making to play an active role in developing a plan for their neighborhood. It is extremely crucial that those who are historically underrepresented be included in this process, even if that requires active recruitment (outreach). Failure of this results in the NRP process being forwarded by those who are already in positions of authority (landlords, building owners, etc.).

The SSCO is a very tight-knit organization that sought the lowest conceivable level of citizen participation in developing the NRP Plan. I was at a meeting where an SSCO board member claimed that the organization was inclusive and open to the community because it "does not turn people away at the door." This is not an acceptable definition of inclusive.

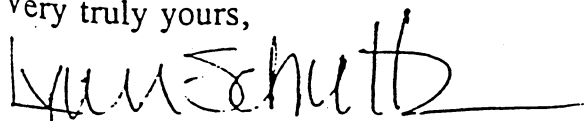
Another deterrent to community member participation is the fact that there is no effort to provide or make child care available for persons for whom that is a necessity that precludes them from participating in the organization. Transportation is also not provided, which excludes those for whom transportation is an issue.

The Stevens Square-Loring Heights NRP Plan is not a plan that the community as a whole developed nor supports. The fact that the SSCO failed to actively seek citizen

participation in the NRP process renders the process a sham, and constitutes a breach, in honor and spirit, of the citizen participation agreement that it signed with the NRP.

If you would like to discuss this further, please give me a call at 870-7907.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lynn Schultz", followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Lynn Schultz  
326 East 18th Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55404

## Pre-workshop organizing plan for the Stevens Square/Loring Heights Neighborhood Revitalization plan.

### Description of the Stevens Square/Loring Heights Neighborhood

The Stevens Square/Loring Heights community is a unique urban neighborhood bounded on the east by Interstate 35W, to the west by Lyndale Avenue, to the north by Interstate 94, and to the south by Franklin Avenue. Stevens Square Park is the community's center, both geographically and socially. Surrounding the park are several blocks of three story, red brick apartment buildings dating from the first quarter of this century, many of these structures are included in the Stevens Square Historic Preservation District.

Stevens Square/Loring Heights has a very diverse, urban demographic make-up of approximately 4500 persons. It is one of the most densely populated areas in the Twin Cities.. The largest population group is young, single middle management people who work both downtown and in the suburbs.. Being a mobile population, many in this group tend to live in the area for only a short time. It is because of this young, transitory population that the neighborhood has been dubbed a "gateway to the Twin Cities". Another large group is older people, many who have lived in the area for ten or more years. The majority of this group live in the two MPHA highrises located in the neighborhood, but many others are scattered throughout the community. African Americans, South East Asians and Native Americans all make up sizable and growing percentages of the neighborhood population. Single mothers and families are also becoming a larger part of the neighborhood. Over 90% of the residents are renters, the rest own single family homes, duplexes or condominiums.

The Stevens Square /Loring Heights neighborhood is at the saturation point with regards to residential treatment facilities and half-way houses. The area is home to a significant population of physically and mentally handicapped persons. If current trends continue this group will continue to grow because of stress on medical institutions and with more non-seniors moving into the MPHA highrises.

The Loring Heights area differs from the Stevens Square part of the neighborhood in several ways. First, it is not as densely populated; the

predominate architectural types are single family homes, duplexes and mansions rather than three story walk-up apartment buildings. Second, Loring Heights is home to many of the neighborhood's community based residential treatment facilities. Many professional associations also make Loring Heights their home. The two parts of the neighborhood are separated by LaSalle Avenue and the Ridgewood hill.

The commercial center of the neighborhood is Nicollet Avenue onto which several restaurants, social services agencies and retail merchants front. Minor commercial hubs include Franklin Avenue and the Clinton Avenue mall. Major institutions in Stevens Square/Loring Heights include Plymouth Congregational Church, Ebenezer Caroline Center, Minneapolis Age and Opportunity Center, Opportunity Workshop, the Minneapolis Urban League and the Minnesota Church Center. The Stevens Square Community Organization, the Stevens Area Managers and Owners Association and the Central Community Council are the primary citizens' groups active in the the Stevens Square/Loring Heights Neighborhood.

## Publicity and Research

Spreading the word about the NRP process to the entire neighborhood is a key element of this plan. A Publicity and Research Committee will be responsible for producing documents and organizing activities which disseminate information on the progress and efforts of the NRP process to the residents, businesses and institutions of the Stevens Square/Loring Heights neighborhood. A newsletter will be produced and distributed to all households, businesses and human service facilities in the neighborhood a minimum of two times. Additionally, short press releases will be sent to nearby churches, employers and other groups for inclusion into their bulletins and/or in-house newsletter. Bulletin boards will be proposed for placement in the SuperValu Mall area and other neighborhood commercial hubs. Updates and meeting announcements will be posted on a regular basis. Flyers and posters posted throughout the neighborhood will also be utilized for this purpose. The keys to publicity are to get the word out and to begin to identify the community in a more positive light. A logo will be created which helps to encourage this positive neighborhood identity. Permanent posters will exist which will allow space for updated information.

Events will also play major roles in the NRP process. Two events will be organized to highlight this project. A kickoff event to draw people into the effort will be planned as a fun way to learn about what is happening in the community and for neighbors to meet neighbors. Caucuses will be formed for the sectors to begin the process of involvement, discussion, and resolution of the will of the sectors. An Organizing conclusion/planning phase kick off event will bring the neighborhood together for an update and to start the planning process.

The Surveyor newspaper printed "a person on the street" question regarding "What will the revitalized neighborhood look like when the NRP process is completed?" in the November issue. Their focus for this issue was on Stevens Square. The Stevens Square/Loring Heights NRP committee will run a half page advertisement in the Surveyor each month for five months. This advertisement will include announcements, a calendar of meetings and events and progress reports. Through this community resource we hope to encourage greater community involvement as well as a more positive image for the neighborhood.

## Organizing Strategies

"How are we going to reach all of the 4500 people in the neighborhood?" That is the primary question facing the NRP committee in its organizing strategy for the community.

In answering that question, the NRP committee has outlined a series of steps to follow in the coming months. The first step is to organize the neighborhood into sectors for organizing purposes. Those sections would be divided similarly to a previous system used in the original neighborhood design plan as follows:

Clinton Avenue area: From 4th Avenue west to 3rd Avenue South

Park area: 3rd Avenue South west to the west side of 1st Avenue South

Nicollet Avenue area: From the east side of Nicollet Avenue to the east side of LaSalle Avenue

In addition, a fourth section, the Loring Heights area, from the west side of LaSalle Avenue to Lyndale Avenue.

In areas divided mid-street may participate in meetings on either side of street.

A second step will be to designate coordinators for each of the sectors who would be in charge of organizing residents in their respective area. This organizing effort could include holding a series of sector meetings. At first sector leaders would be appointed by the NRP committee. When a "critical mass" of neighborhood people are involved in the sector meetings a sector leader will be selected by a democratic process. Assistant sector leaders, block and apartment building organizers/leaders will assist the sector leaders with designated areas of each sector.

A taskforce charged with coordinating sector organizing efforts would be created. It would consist of a cross section of the neighborhood, including renters, homeowners, rental property owners, businesses, social services, churches and institutions, families and singles, seniors, youth, minorities (racial, ethnicity, etc.), and people who work in the area. The taskforce will consist of the chair of the NRP committee, three representatives from each sector and two at large members to ascertain proper representation.

Reaching underrepresented groups, i.e., youth, renters and minorities, is a major challenge of the NRP. Through block club meetings and door-to-door canvassing we hope to reach each person. Activities will be organized which will target specific groups, particularly youth and residents of the two MPHA highrises. Recognizing the high rate of tenant turnover, efforts will be made to learn of their concerns and ideas for the neighborhood as they are moving in.

A part time NRP coordinator will be hired to coordinate the organizing and information efforts of the NRP planning process.

## Outreach

Learning peoples' issues of concern and making everyone a part of the planning process is the goal of the NRP. Working to bring people into the NRP plan process is the goal of the Outreach committee. Utilizing



direct mailings, visiting with existing organizations as well as door knocking on a block-by-block basis will be the main strategies employed in obtaining input from every Stevens Square/Loring Heights neighbor. Mailings will include return postcards to enable a data base of names and addresses to be compiled. Two area-wide mailings of both an informational and promotional nature will be sent. Presentations will also be made to organizations, social services agencies, area churches, business groups, schools, block clubs etc..., in the surrounding neighborhood to gain their input and participation. Contacting landlords and encouraging them to set up meetings and to circulate information and surveys to their tenants is crucial to the success of this project. Tenants make up 90% of the population, in many cases landlords are the keys to reaching the tenants. Additionally, apartment managers will be asked to post newsletters and announcements in their laundry rooms, entrances and other public areas in their buildings. Utilizing the neighborhood commercial hubs, SuperVahu Mall, Nicollet Avenue, the laundromat, to canvas or otherwise learn people's concerns are also integral parts of this plan. Piggy backing on some of the Publicity Committee's efforts, such as the newsletters, flyers, posters etc., are also essential.

A "Welcome Wagon" packet, which will include a questionnaire and information on how to get involved, will be used to reach renters as they move in because of the high tenant turn-over rate in the neighborhood. To provide information an answering service or machine will be set up and frequently monitored.

Volunteers will need training to enable them to accomplish these goals effectively. Workshops and training sessions will include skills sessions on door knocking, writing and interpreting surveys and leading effective meetings. Learning these skills will further build the capacity of those involved to better organize and advocate for the neighborhood.

## Identification

The goal of the Identification committee is to research issues and identify people and groups which make up the Stevens Square/Loring Heights neighborhood. A major effort will be made to identify all owners and renters organizations, businesses and workers in the neighborhood. Personal interviews will be utilized to complete the list. Surveys are crucial to the successful identification of the issues concerning the people of the neighborhood. Working in conjunction with and utilizing all

available resources is essential. Use of the needs assessment completed by the Volunteer of America Drug Prevention Program and the neighborhood survey currently being done by the Central Community Council. A survey committee will be established to write and implement the final element of the planning process. The nature of the survey to be conducted will be developed by a survey committee and at sector meetings.

By utilizing existing information and other sources now being developed the neighborhood can develop a self knowledge of the needs and issues presently confronting residents. It would be both economically and organizationally difficult for the neighborhood NRP committee to develop all the needed background information independently

Maps and other information about the physical condition and layout of the neighborhood will be obtained through the Planning Department and other city agencies. Information on zoning, street layouts, utilities and conditions of structures are the data of most interest. Other factors will be brought out during the surveying and canvassing efforts. Researching who to reach, what needs to be addressed and how to effectively contact residents are the main tasks of the Identification committee.

A number of issues for each of the neighborhood sectors are already evident from the 1976 survey of the neighborhood. Are they still issues?

Nicollet Avenue area:

- Loans and grants
- Zoning controls
- Vacancies, both storefronts and apartment units
- Low cost design services
- Additional parking
- Police protection, panhandling, public drunkenness, and personal safety

Clinton Avenue area:

- Faster police response
- Assaults panhandling, public inebriacy, burglary and personal safety
- Lack of parking
- Abandoned cars
- Gardens
- Tot lots/mini parks
- Snow removal

Park area:

Building renovations, maintenance and neighborhood character  
preservation

Landlord accessibility and accountability

Parking

Building security, personal safety

Crime prevention and development of improved community  
awareness of group action

Police visibility and protection; reduction of panhandling and public  
drunkenness

Improved resident communication within buildings and blocks

Continued development of public activities in the park

Loring Heights area--was not included in the 1976 survey.

Neighborhood character preservation

Landlord accessibility

Parking

Building security and better police response

Improvement of neighborhood self awareness and heightened  
community determination for joint action

Street problems with residents of group homes and day treatment  
centers

Police response and visibility

To the NRP Administrative Review Team

Thank you for allowing residents of Stevens Square the time to voice our concerns about the current NRP plan for our community. Now that we have been heard, we request the current NRP plan be returned to the community for further review.

While we appreciate the time and effort put forth in developing the NRP plan, we feel the process of participation has been sadly neglected. We desire consensus by the participants who actually live in Stevens Square, most of whom are renters, including a growing number of minorities.

The plan developed by the sectors was submitted to the implementation committee, however it was revised enroute to that committee, after it left the sectors. These revisions were not given back to the sectors for review or approval as is proper in this process. The revised plan was then submitted as representative of the majority, but in fact, reflected the view of only a few.

Before decisions can be made as to how our neighborhood will use NRP funds, more neighborhood participation needs to occur. The use of public funds needs monitoring by the public for the public interest. To this end, we recommend and reiterate, that not only should the plan be returned for further review and reconstruction, but that outreach to all in our community become a formal process, by inviting and encouraging participation in a heretofore unprecedented effort. To summarize the main contentions:

1. The NRP contract was not honored in reference to the stipulations outlined in the preworkshop organizing plan. Result: Information about NRP was denied the community at large.
2. Lack of thorough outreach resulted in poor turnout at the sector meetings by renters. Most meetings were heavily dominated by landlords. In addition, the neighborhood survey was biased in design and produced inadequate results.
3. Surveyor ads were dropped in favor of using Neighbors, a new tabloid with far less consistent distribution. In addition, Neighbors, promoted as an all voluntary publication, was in fact developed and administered by a paid professional, employed with NRP funds. Finally, Neighbors publication occurs in building space provided by a local landlord who is the neighborhood rep to the NRP Implementation Committee.

These above numbered factors combined to promote exclusion among a majority of residents in Stevens Square, leaving most of the decision making to those with a highly vested financial interest.

#### Our Suggestions:

Because of the many flaws in this process, a public outcry has emerged from our neighborhood. Our citizens want to redress the inadequacies of the present NRP process; to actively seek out and include those who were previously left out; and to achieve renewed optimism for a truer representation of the community. We cannot in good conscience, stand aside, and allow a plan whose main focus is on the interests of a few. A finer goal would place the existing plan under wider scrutiny by the community. An opportunity exists for a true grass roots involvement in Stevens Square as follows:

1. Mere passive publication of dates, times, places will not insure the attendance necessary for successful process. A scrupulous effort needs to be made to reach all the people, such as:
  - meetings will be designated as "neighborhood events" one on one contact- talk to the people; ask their opinion.
  - before meetings, use phone or door to door. Conduct a meaningful reassessment survey, one that reaches the whole community.
  - begin a neighborhood network utilizing a designated person from each building to see that attempts are made to connect with those in their building.
  - social gatherings, complete with food and beverages, within their own buildings to "talk up" the process.
  - create atmosphere that welcomes participation
2. Begin advertising in local publications to reach a wider community; why not the Circle, Insights, etc., as well as using the Surveyor.
3. Rigorous compliance to the NRP contract.
4. Set a time limit for review process and stick to it.
5. Build on elements from the first plan; add or subtract items the community decides on; resubmit to NRP Implementation Committee

A new plan that promotes a better quality of life for the individual, ergo the neighborhood, should be developed. While the vested interests of bricks and mortar should not be brushed aside, the vested interests of those who live within these dwellings, who call them "home" needs to take precedence. The opportunity to participate in the community by encouraging individual talents is the best kind of vested interest. Our plan to involve the community can be used as a model for neighborhoods yet to begin the NRP process. Thus, a decision to send the plan back to our community for review will benefit not only Stevens Square, but the City at large.

Original Signed by  
Bert Berlowe & Pat Reind

# UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Twin Cities Campus

Minnesota Center for Survey Research

2122 Riverside Avenue  
Minneapolis, MN 55454-1320

612-627-4282

July 12, 1993

Administrative Review Committee

Att: Phillip Eckhert, Chair

425 Crown Roller Mill

105 Fifth Avenue South

Minneapolis, MN 55401-2585

Dear Mr. Eckhert:

This letter is my response to a request for information from Carl Cooper, a resident of the Stevens Square neighborhood. Based on a contract between the Minnesota Center for Survey Research and the NRP, from June 1991 to December 1992 the Center was the organization that provided all survey-related services to NRP neighborhoods.

The two MCSR staff members who worked with the Stevens Square neighborhood were myself and Frances Kiesling. Most of our contacts were with Guy Fisher and Mansoor Alyeshmerni and occurred between June and August 1992.

Working with neighborhoods to design and conduct a survey is always challenging, because most neighborhoods do not have any prior experience with surveys. Based on our experiences with ten NRP neighborhoods, working with the Stevens Square neighborhood was unusually difficult.

First, we had difficulties finding out the time and location of NRP coordinating committee meetings, which we needed to attend because discussion about the survey was on the agenda.

Second, Mr. Alyeshmerni and Mr. Fisher informed us that the neighborhood did not want to follow the standard procedures that are used at the Center for mail surveys. The Center typically does up to three mailings and mails all surveys with first-class postage. These procedures are followed because they typically produce a response rate of 50% or better. The survey plan for Stevens Square was based on one mailing by bulk mail. The Center expected less than a 20% response rate from such a mailing, and this was a major point of contention between the neighborhood and the Center.

Third, in other neighborhoods, we have typically worked with a small group of residents to design the survey questions. These draft questions are then reviewed by a larger group of residents and other people with an interest in the neighborhood. In Stevens Square, we designed the survey questions while working only with the neighborhood NRP coordinator, Guy Fisher, and the Chair of the NRP coordinating committee, Mansoor Alyeshmerni. These draft questions were then reviewed by the NRP coordinating committee, which had very few residents as committee members.

The survey that the Center designed for Stevens Square was not a finished product, because the Center was instructed by Bob Miller, NRP Director, to stop working with the neighborhood. Ms. Kiesling and I were aware that some of the survey questions were biased, and that there had been insufficient attempts to involve renters in the survey design process. We informed both Mr. Alyeshmerni and Mr. Fisher that the survey was not a finished product, and that we felt it needed more work.

The Center had a copy of the Stevens Square Planning Information Base, prepared by the Minneapolis Planning Department in Winter 1991. It was clear from this document that most neighborhood residents were renters, with 84.5 of the dwelling units in the neighborhood being apartment buildings of 5 or more units. Beginning in June and on numerous occasions during our work with the Stevens Square neighborhood, we asked to meet with renters from the neighborhood, since it was clear to us that this group of residents must be included in the survey process.

On August 5, 1992, I spoke with Bill Anderson, NRP staff, about our difficulties in getting Mr. Alyeshmerni to listen to our advice and about the need to involve renters in the survey design process. Mr. Anderson provided the name of a neighborhood renter, who would be able to provide the names of other renters willing to attend a meeting about the survey. We were still trying to arrange such a meeting, to review the survey draft, when we were instructed to stop working with the neighborhood.

I was concerned about the following issues: (1) that the survey would not be useful for the neighborhood since the NRP action plan would be written before the survey results were available; (2) that because of not following procedures to increase the response rate, the survey would have such a low response that the results would not be generalizable to the neighborhood; and (3) that the survey was being done only because of a perception that NRP wanted the neighborhood to do a survey.

Feel free to call me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Rossana Armson  
Acting Director

cc: Carl Cooper  
326 East 18th Street, Apt. 5  
Minneapolis, MN 55404

# Neighborhood News

## West Bank

**T**he Cop Shop/Safety Center is open, at least unofficially. The location had to be changed to 510 Cedar, but the furniture is in.

Local beat officers will likely be spending about two hours a day at the Shop/Center (an official name has not been decided upon), and a number of spin-off programs are under consideration. These include crisis referrals, a newsletter and an escort/citizens patrol service. Molly Collins of the Project Area Committee (PAC) will staff the center, and volunteers from area businesses and institutions, such as Augsburg College, are being sought.

Past disputes over governance of the operation appear to have been put on the back burner in lieu of getting the facility open and seeing how well it works on its own. An official opening for sometime this spring is being considered.

## Stevens Square

**A**fter months of wending its way through city channels and agencies, the final Stevens Square Neighborhood Revitalization Plan (NRP) Action Plan will finally come up for a neighborhood ratification vote February 27 at 1 pm at Stevie Ray's comedy the-

will then move on to the NRP Implementation Committee March 11 for approval, after which it will go to the NRP Policy Board, ending its journey finally at the city council.

The redrafting of the Stevens Square community Organization's (SSCO) bylaws is still underway. The main points of contention remain the size of the board and the number of seats reserved for particular groups, such as renters and property owners. An early proposal was rejected by MCDA staff as being unrepresentative of the neighborhood, and therefore potentially in violation of SSCO's contract with that agency. Later proposals have attempted various formulae for dealing with the fact that some 93% of the neighborhood's residents are renters. One proposal, accepted by the MCDA, would reserve three seats on a 15-member board for renters, two for landlords, and three for resident home or condo owners, with 50 percent of the remaining seats reserved for neighborhood residents. A counter proposal from another neighborhood group would reserve as many as seven seats for renters on a larger board—up to 23 members—with specific seats also reserved for various minority interests, such as people of color and group home residents. A majority on the current board are property owners.

A date of April 14 has tentatively been set for the neighborhood to vote on whatever proposal finally

in doubt, however, because the normal meeting place, the Ebenezer Caroline Center, is not available that day.

A quorum of at least 25 people is required for the vote to go forward, and a two-thirds majority of those voting is needed for passage.

—Ellen Dunkle

## Loring Park

**G**retchen Nicholls, president of the Citizens for a Loring Park Community (CLPC), was recently elected Chair of the Congress of Minneapolis Neighborhoods (COMN).

CLPC encourages all interested persons to attend its annual meeting Monday, March 8, at 6:30 pm at the Loring Park Shelter. CLPC chair Gretchen Nicholls said that she wanted particularly to encourage those who were interested in serving on the CLPC board of directors to attend. The Annual Meeting will be followed by the Annual Party.

CLPC is applying for a \$8,563 grant from the PRO-Neighborhoods program to fund the Loring News newsletter on a monthly basis and to mail it to all neighborhood households and institutions. CLPC will find out in March if it will receive the grant.

## Elliot Park

**T**he Public Drinking Task Force of Elliot Park

working with other groups to form a larger task force to convince the county to deal with the problems created by the changes in the status of the detox center at 1800 Chicago. The lock-down facility at the center was converted into a voluntary wet shelter after the center was accused of violating patient rights. The group of Elliot Park residents feels that the problem of public drunkenness has been exacerbated by the change, and they want the county to find a more permanent solution.

## Downtown

**T**he Downtown Minneapolis Residents Association (DMRA) has voted to approve the Downtown Council's plans to hold this summer's Ribfest in the parking lot east of the downtown library known as the Ritz Block. The DMRA did set some conditions on the move: 24-hour security will be provided for the area, and live music will end at 10:15 pm Thursday night of the festival, 11 pm Friday and Saturday, and 10 pm Sunday.

At its monthly meeting in February the DMRA also discussed the plans for a shuttle transit system downtown starting this fall. The system as envisioned would be a series of electric trolleys running the length of Nicollet Mall and Second Avenue from the Convention Center to Washington Street every 3-5 minutes. The DMRA voted to appeal to the city transportation department to have the system extended at least to First Avenue, and preferably across the Hennepin Avenue Bridge to Riverplace.

## Downtown/North Loop

**A**fter years of trying unsuccessfully to organize the residents of the North Loop, MCDA citizen participation manager Bob Cooper has given the DMRA the green light to alter its own bylaws to allow them to accept



## Difficult Democracy in Stevens Square

by John Yewell

About 110 people went to Plymouth Church in Stevens Square on April 22 to vote on new bylaws for their neighborhood organization, an exercise which in most communities ranks somewhere below volunteering for trash pick-up in motivational value.

People signed in as they entered. To vote you were supposed to live, have a business interest, or own property in the neighborhood. Most of the names revealed local addresses, but nobody asked for any form of identification to verify eligibility. I asked out-going SSCO staffer Quentin Randolph if I could get a copy of the list, and was told that he could not guarantee me getting one. After last year's annual meeting, neighborhood residents requesting copies of the sign-in sheet were denied them by the Stevens Square Community Organization (SSCO) board, although one person was allowed to hand-write his own copy.

Two proposals were before the group. One had been developed over months of meetings sponsored by a committee of SSCO. The times and places of these meetings, while not widely publicized, had been available, but few had taken much interest in the process until the committee's proposals were made public. "Where were all these people?" several wondered, while the bylaws committee was meeting?

The proposed new bylaws differed from the old in many respects, but the major difference was in how board membership would be apportioned. Current bylaws allow two of eighteen board members to be non-residents, such as landlords or business owners. The committee's proposal would have allowed six out of fifteen to live outside the neighborhood.

In a neighborhood of 90% renters, many were outraged, and responded with their own proposal. This alternative set of bylaws proposed a board of 25 members. While re-

serving slots for several designated groups, including seven seats for renters, the proposal did not guarantee any seats for landlords, who were equally outraged. We own the buildings, they thought, don't we have a stake? The framers of what became known as the "inclusive" bylaws did not, it seems, think it necessary to include landlords.

The stage was set, both sides marshalled their forces, and in the end nothing happened. It takes a two-thirds majority to change the bylaws, and neither side had it.

Alan Arthur, president of the Central Community Housing Trust, offered a compromise that would have guaranteed a certain number of seats to renters, homeowners and landlords alike, with staggered terms to guarantee board stability and regular turnover. In the evening's increasingly unreal atmosphere, in which one proposal after another was voted down, Arthur's alternative found support in both camps, but in the end it failed too.

As the room emptied, one resident said that in his thirty years living in Stevens Square he had never seen it so divided.

Late last year, when the neighborhood was putting the final touches on its Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) Action Plan, several disputes broke out over wording. There were accusations of deliberate omissions and low chicanery aimed at thwarting the popular will. The problems were eventually ironed out, and out of the troubles there was born a brief attempt to bring the warring factions together. On the night of the bylaws vote, nobody recalled that effort.

In the midst of the parliamentary folderol of the bylaws meeting, Arthur spoke up: "It is extremely important," he said, "that this neighborhood pull together."

Sometime before June 30 Stevens Square will elect new members to the SSCO board of directors, and once again the battle lines will be drawn.

## MCDA Review Panel Submits Final Report

by Winton Pittcoff

The committee assembled to investigate and review the Minneapolis Community Development Agency (MCDA) presented its report to the Minneapolis City Council on April 7. At a meeting April 15 the Board of Commissioners of the MCDA, made up of all 13 city council members, unanimously approved a restructuring proposal put forward by Executive Director Jay Jensen. Later that afternoon Jensen informed six MCDA staffers—all in the upper levels of management—that they were being laid off.

Jensen told the board that the move had to be made soon because of the mood at the agency.

"The stress level had been tremendous," said Carol Allis, supervisor of the Public Information Department at the MCDA. "People were getting very nervous," she said, adding that Jensen was the only one who really knew what changes were coming.

The stress of having to lay off employees was compounded by the media attention paid to the issue, Allis said. The coverage made it seem like those laid off were fired due to malfeasance, Allis said, which made their departure more difficult than it already was.

## Fed to start over with environmental review

from page 1

an EIS is required by the Minnesota Environmental Rights Act (MERA) when a "significant impact," such as the destruction of resources in a designated historical district, is planned. He said that MERA requires that as a part of an EIS, "feasible and prudent" alternatives be studied before historical assets can be demolished.

Critics have charged that the Fed's original EAW did not go far enough in explaining why alternate sites, particularly the Itasca Site in the North Loop area, were not feasible. The Itasca Site is a 9-acre empty lot four blocks from the Bridgehead Site. The Fed says the Itasca Site is the wrong shape to accommodate its design requirements, and that, among other things, it does not have attractive enough views. It was unclear whether the Fed would provide more information on alternative sites in its new



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## Stevens Square NRP Plan Gets Tentative Approval

by John Yewell

The Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) Implementation Committee met June 21 and gave tentative approval to the portions of the Stevens Square NRP Plan that have survived review.

The plan must now be approved by the NRP Policy Board at its next meeting July 12.

The plan includes:

- Several components which deal with beautification, including streetscaping, greening, and historic lighting.
- A \$500,000, low-interest loan to the Stevens Community Associates (SCA) properties. Approximately \$375,000 would go to pay for HUD-mandated repairs to bring buildings up to code, with the rest for exterior enhancements.
- \$14,000 to conduct a study on the feasibility of a neighborhood-based Community Development Corporation (CDC).
- \$32,000 to develop a common social services plan. NRP director Bob Miller was particularly supportive of this request, saying that Stevens Square was the first neighborhood to develop such a plan.
- Creation of a \$500,000 "Contingency Fund."

This proposal was opposed by some members of the committee who argued that its purpose was vague and that it set a bad prece-

dent for other Action Plans. Miller responded that the neighborhood was still determining the nature of its unmet community service needs, and such a fund would allow needed flexibility.

A request for \$100,000 to construct a park overlook along 17th Street parallel to I-94 east of 1st Avenue was reinstated, against the recommendation of the NRP staff. Miller had asked that the project be put on hold until other changes were made first, expressing some concern that creating a public space there might bring with it other social problems.

Stevens Square NRP committee chair and Implementation Committee member Mansoor Alyeshmarni argued that the project would be a big plus to the neighborhood. "How it is going to be policed should not stop us from doing it," he said. The view of downtown from there is one of the neighborhood's big assets, he said, and would be enhanced by removing the cyclone fence and replacing it with a railing and other landscape improvements.

After some concern was expressed over how future freeway expansion might affect the project, the money was reinstated.

The tentative nature of the approval was connected to charges made at the meeting by a group of neighborhood residents. Karl Cooper, speaking for the group, charged that the process by which the Stevens Square NRP

Action Plan had been prepared for the Implementation Committee had been flawed. He asked that the committee take a second look at the plan development process for the neighborhood.

Committee chair, deputy mayor Rip Rapson, appointed a committee of three to review complaints from the group and be prepared to make a recommendation to the Policy Board July 12.

A second complaint related to allegations of improper remarks made at the May 20 Implementation Committee by committee member and Stevens Square landlord Jim Larson.

According to a letter presented to the committee, Larson is alleged to have said to Karl Cooper at the May 20 meeting that if Cooper had his way "long-haired, dirty, disabled, club-footed persons" would be involved in making decisions about the NRP plan. It was unclear how many other members of the committee had heard the alleged remark.

Larson is Cooper's landlord.

While not acknowledging the accuracy of the quote, Rapson said such comments were inappropriate, and said he would request a written apology from Larson. Several onlookers, including new Stevens Square Community Organization (SSCO) board member Ray Sundstrom, called for Larson's resignation.

Larson was not present at the meeting to respond.

## Support for West Bank safety center falters

from page 1

was a mistake, one she feels the  
officials were not... tiality was the trigger for this ac-





House District 61A Representative Karen Clark

## Karen Clark Discusses Issues Before Leaving for Harvard

by James Davies

State Representative Karen Clark has been awarded a Bush Fellowship to support her pursuit of a Master's Degree from the John F. Kennedy School of Public Policy at Harvard University.

A full-time legislator since her first election to the Minnesota House of Representatives in 1980, Rep. Clark has become known for her progressive work in civil rights, environmental protection, jobs and workers' rights, health care reform, senior citizen advocacy and housing. She chairs the Housing Committee in the House of Representatives and has been a leader in the movement for economic conversion, the effort to guide the economy towards environmentally sound, less military-dependent industries and jobs.

A public health nurse and commu-

nity activist before her election to the House, Clark has been returned to office every two years with very high majorities and is a familiar presence at forums and meetings in District 61, which covers the near south area of Central Minneapolis, from the West Bank to eastern Stevens Square, from Elliot Park to the Phillips neighborhood.

Clark will be at Harvard until December, returning for the next legislative session in January 1994. The Master's program is designed so that mid-career legislators can complete their studies while working in their home legislatures during sessions. Karen will have two sessions at Harvard, and plans to graduate in 1996.

Before leaving for a national conference of state legislators in California and then Harvard, Clark talked with THE SURVEYOR about her legislative work, and her new plans.

**Surveyor:** What are you hoping to gain from your studies at Harvard?

**Rep. Clark:** What I really want to learn more about is community economics. I also want to study environmental racism and economic conversion. I want to learn more and develop a stronger theoretical basis. My economic background is self-taught. I'm looking forward to learning more about theory.

It's a chance for me to study more deeply some of the issues I care about...to take time to read whole books, instead of just articles, to discuss the issues with experts, and deepen my grasp of issues. I'll be exposed to ways of thinking different from mine.

(Clark mentioned that the JFK School is "an incredible place to network," with people from all over the United States; about a third of the stu-

See Clark, page 13

## SSCO/NRP Review Committee Suggests Changes in Process

by John Yewell

A special administrative review team of the Implementation Committee of the Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) has recommended that the Action Plan formulated by the Stevens Square Community Organization (SSCO) be forwarded to the NRP Policy Board for its consideration, rather than have the plan set aside as some neighborhood residents had urged.

The report concluded that while SSCO did not fully implement the provisions of its participation agreement with the NRP,

it did make reasonable efforts to involve all segments of the community in the process. It also said that there was no evidence that the action plan disadvantages any particular neighborhood group, but that a great deal of planning remains to be done.

The review team was appointed by NRP Director Bob Miller during the June 21 Implementation Committee meeting, at which neighborhood resident Karl Cooper and others charged that SSCO had developed its plan in ways which violated SSCO's Participation Agreement with the NRP.

Team member Philip Eckhart of the Hennepin County Office of Planning and Development reported to the Implementation Committee July 22 that separate meetings had been held in the Stevens Square-Loring Heights neighborhood on July 7 and 8 to hear both sides of the issue. According to the nine-page report, some 20 people turned out the first night to express their reservations about the process, with approximately 15 present the second night to support the plan.

According to the report, criticism of the Action Plan had been more concerned

See Stevens Square, page 13

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## SSCO/NRP plan survives critique, prompts change

from page 1

with process than content. Critics charged that, in the words of the report, "The process was directed and controlled by property owners and business interests, many of whom are non-residents." They also charged, among other things, that various groups, such as minorities and renters, had been underrepresented, that some residents had felt unwelcome at NRP planning meetings, and that provisions of the participation agreement relating to outreach and survey methods had been inadequate.

Defenders of the process wondered why no grievances had ever been filed during the course of the plan's development. They acknowledged that participant demographics did not mirror the neighborhood, but claimed that a good-faith effort had been made to involve everyone.

Supporters also claimed that the NRP participation agreement was meant as a "wish list" that SSCO had endeavored to fully accomplish but which was unattainable due to financial limitations. To this assertion, the report responds that "NRP staff should clarify that all neighborhoods are expected to carry out all activities described in the participation agreement." The agreement was a minimum, not maximum, set of expectations, said Eckhart.

The report also found:

• While not all elements of the participation agreement were carried out, several were done in a manner that exceeded requirements.

• "The NRP plan, and associated process, have clearly become a lightning rod in this neighborhood that is rife with acrimonious relationships."

• "Implementation of the participation agreement in Stevens Square-Loring Heights does not appear to have been adequately monitored by the NRP or have received sufficient financial and training support to ensure success. [D]eficiencies... should have been identified much earlier."

• "[I]t is incumbent upon the

NRP process managers to ensure that all ideas are entertained, all interested parties are genuinely welcomed and a fair and open decision process is followed."

The report, which was adopted unanimously by the Implementation Committee, recommends that the NRP Policy Board ask SSCO to "make appropriate modifications in the implementation process to ensure broader neighborhood participation in preparation of the Neighborhood Master Plan and Social Services Plan." It also recommends that NRP staff work more closely to monitor neighborhood planning activities for compliance with participation agreements.

The report also suggested "provision for independent facilitation of planning sessions (to avoid conflicts that arise from having 'content advocates' also serve as 'process managers')."

Eckhart on several occasions drew attention to the potential problems caused when advocates also chair committees: "My interpretation is that we have some very strong proponents of the plan that probably ought not to have been in the positions of directing the process itself. We have to put our antennae up and be careful about people in leadership roles with an interest in projects."

In his remarks to the committee, Eckhart made clear that his team recognized the level of friction in the neighborhood. Liking it to a "cat fight" Eckhart said: "There is quite a bit of acrimony in the neighborhood we did not want to get involved in."

Lisa Kugler, representing the Minneapolis Public Housing Authority on the Implementation

Committee, cited the example of Stevens Square in how the NRP process can distort neighborhood problems in the process of trying to solve them.

"The NRP exacerbates political divisions within neighborhoods," said Kugler. "At the earliest possible stage there should be a process to identify those elements so that people going in can understand where the conflict is likely to be."

One committee member asked: Didn't Bob Cooper (citizen participation manager at the MCDA who oversees contractual relationships with neighborhood groups) have a mechanism to review processes? Would the MCDA "keep an eye out for wayward neighborhood groups?"

MCDA Director Jay Jensen responded: "Well, we'll keep an eye out."

But Kugler went on:

"We can be much more hands on without interfering in the process. We have to push for a higher standard of conduct. There are a lot of fairly dysfunctional things about neighborhood groups, and it is time to look at those things."

When another committee member asked Eckhart if he felt the friction in the neighborhood would heal if the Action Plan were sent forward to the policy board, Eckhart responded:

"If all these people can come in and talk to us, it surprised me that there hadn't been better communication throughout the planning process. These are reasonable people with strong feelings. Yes, I think there's some potential there, and opportunities can be created."

the ban. I'm both angry and appreciative. I'm angry deeply compromised and appreciative that he too issue. He said, "I'm the identical to take on this issue it's true."

I wouldn't call it an compromise; it's a do-or-die promise.

I wish Clinton had pushed it more because Congress passed the N (against gays in the m don't know if they could a veto.

Surveyor: What are you for the next session?

Rep. Clark: I know the things I want to have to get some revenue clean-up of lead which

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#### District 60:

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Linda Berglin

G-9 State Capitol

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227 State Capitol

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Tel: 296-4274

### MN House of Representatives

#### District 58B:

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577 State Office Bui

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#### District 59B:

Phyllis Kahn

## Thank You, Daniel Johnson ...

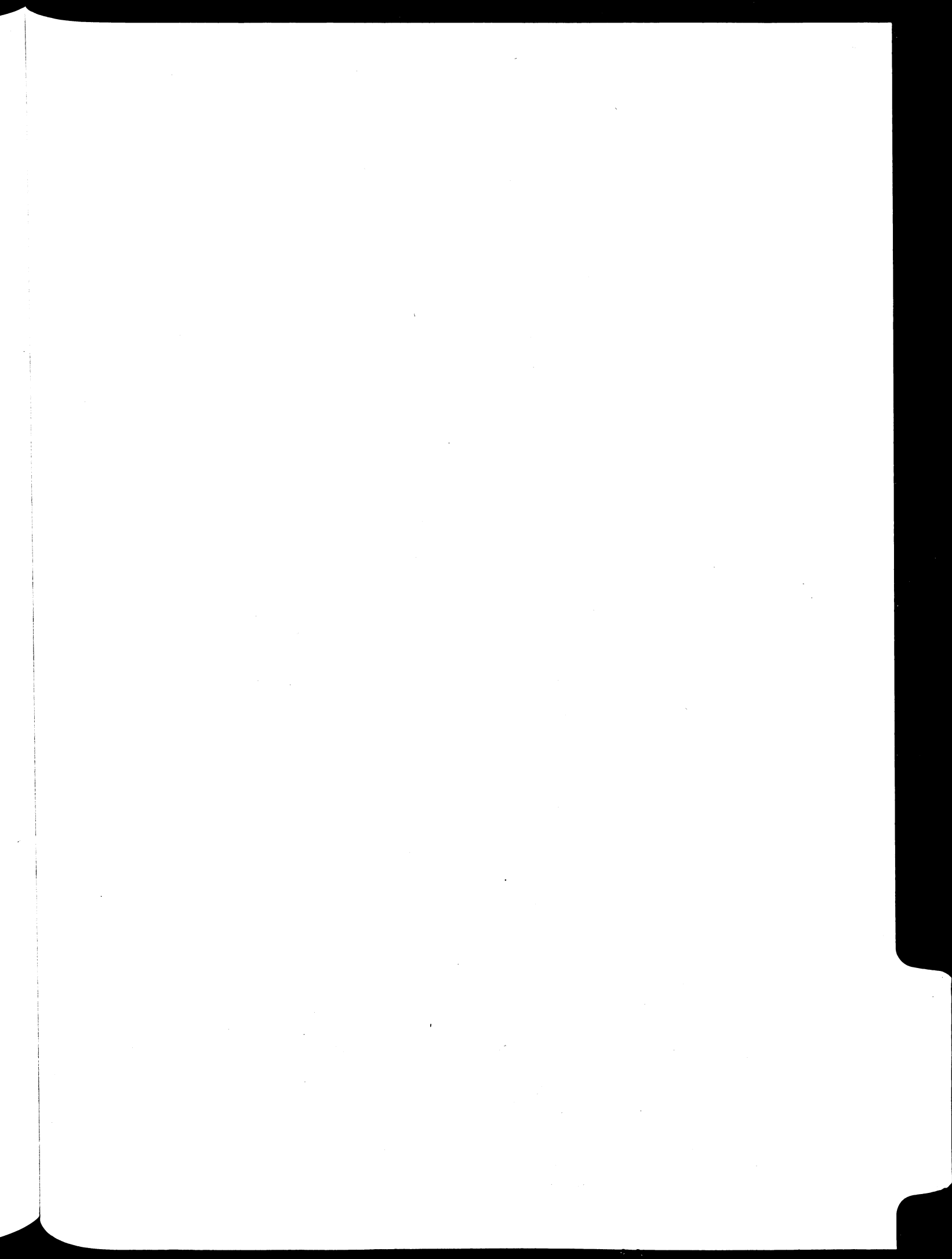


Daniel Johnson

With this issue of THE SURVEYOR, we bid a fond farewell to our advertising representative, Daniel Johnson, who has worked with the paper since April 1992. A California native, he will be studying in Macalester College's Teacher Licensure Program to obtain credentials to teach history to high school students, perhaps in Montana.

... & Best Wishes!

# We take a healthy interest



## **NRP Evaluation Focus Group – February 3, 1999**

### **6 Participants**

- 4 Park Sector
- 1 Clinton Sector
- 1 Loring Heights Sector
- 2 females
- 4 males
- time lived in neighborhood: 1.5 yrs, 5.5 yrs, 3.5 yrs, 2 yrs, 13 yrs, 1 yr

### **1. What neighborhood projects and programs are you familiar with?**

- Gardening/greening projects
- Block club
- Safety Committee
- Lighting program
- Community Mural project
- Harvest festival picnic
- Spring picnic
- Movies and music
- Newsletter
- Jobs programs, sponsor job fairs
- "I've noticed a lot more new businesses, but I am not aware of any formal initiatives." (participants referenced businesses also farther down Nicollet)
- "Eat Street" banners
- "I am less aware of what they do for businesses or development, than other programs."
- "I like that the programs I am aware of involve a lot of people and help you get to know your neighbors."

### **2. How do these programs or projects benefit the neighborhood?**

- Gives people an opportunity to meet different people
- Trees and flowers add a lot to the community environment & can deter littering. It could deter more, but there is a lot less urban grunge – broken bottles, junk, etc.
- "It [greening] gives people an opportunity to meet, it gives people an opportunity to be outdoors."
- "The gardens give the impression that this is an area where people give a shit."
- One participant said the community programs and projects, "create an environment that is very different than downtown. It is nice to live in an area with trees, flowers, lights – a place where I feel good about coming back too. It adds a lot, it really does"
- She said it is a place "where you see people talking to each other." The participant said these kinds of things are the reasons she decided to recently renew her lease and stay in the area.
- "Urban life can be very bleak if you let the environment be that way." These programs help the community avoid that type of environment.



- One of the participants said Nolan had made an extra effort to get her to come to a meeting. He went to meet her to walk with her to the meeting. She said it was really nice to have someone make that extra effort beyond just calling her on the phone to tell her about the meeting.

**3. How do these programs or projects need to be improved?**

- Increase awareness of all programs, projects and events going on in the neighborhood. One participant said she fears there is some lack of awareness of all that SSCO does. She does think the newsletter has good potential to address this.
- "I don't think I was really aware of what was going on until the newsletter started arriving and they inserted the calendar."
- One resident questioned if some of the programs were new or just starting to develop. She said the addition of the newsletter and that type of publicity may just give the impression that the programs are also additions. Find ways to deal with/improve communication, specifically in relation to the huge turnover of residents in the neighborhood.
- The structure that has been added to the park should have additional improvements to make it more useful and/or attractive, things such as adding a roof to have it function as a rain/sun shelter or adding vines to it.
- Also related to the park, one resident said they wanted the bar across the basketball hoop removed. Even if the police placed it there to keep drug dealers, etc., out of the park, he said it should be removed so people can actually enjoy the park.

**4. What additional programs or projects are necessary or appropriate for this neighborhood?**

- One program/project a resident thought had been previously developed, and should be developed, are "helping hand" cards to give to panhandlers in the neighborhood. The cards would have telephone numbers and locations for social service agencies, homeless shelters, food banks, etc., providing information the individuals could potentially utilize. Others agreed this would be a nice thing for SSCO to produce and provide to neighborhood residents for distribution.
- SSCO should work on getting some development into the "big hole in the ground" next to Johnson Meat Company.
- Greening projects should include community gardening opportunities to grown vegetables, i.e. one garden where neighborhood residents could have a plot of land to grow food versus just flowers. "The flowers are nice, but it would be nice to actually grow food." The participants suggested this could be in the park or in a lot along the greenway/highway.
- SSCO should monitor snow shoveling on the neighborhood's sidewalks and report property owners that do not shovel. Participants also suggested the organization could help empower residents by printing the phone number for reporting property owners and any other related information.

**5. How familiar are you with the NRP, the Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program directed by the City of Minneapolis?**

Knowledge of NRP ranged from very little beyond name recognition to a little and just learning.

**6. The following projects or programs have been developed in conjunction with the NRP. What is your perception or impression of these programs or projects?**

The participants were generally aware of each of the programs/projects and/or the improvements made as related to these properties, etc. However, these participants were not really aware of what improvements had been done to the Nicollet Ave. streetscape. They also did not necessary know what improvements had been made to the Van Dusen, although they thought it was a nice building. The overlook project was generally familiar to the participants, but they did not have name recognition for "17<sup>th</sup> St. Overlook."

**17<sup>th</sup> St. Overlook:**

- Most participants did not have any real reaction to the project, but with some questioning they all implied that the overlook was a nice addition to that area of the neighborhood
- they thought it helped reduce litter in that area
- it helps connect the areas of the neighborhood and it looks nice from the freeway.
- "It is nice, a lot of those places if they are left completely undeveloped just become places for people to throw trash and stuff."

**Van Dusen Mansion:**

- the basic response was, "its neat, can we tour it?"
- "it looks better than it did"
- One participant said it is a nice building, and looks nice for the neighborhood, but it is difficult to be put in the position to save one building when there are other mansions, just as beautiful, in the area that may also be in need of improvements and "saving."  
"It is neat, but what you see around it are a lot of other neat buildings that aren't quite as spectacular falling into ruin. And I don't know, it seems that maybe saving those buildings is equally as important as saving one building so some millionaire can come in. I don't know, I guess it would have been sad to see that one go, so it was a good idea."
- To offer incentives to people to improve properties is generally a good idea but it is difficult.

**Stevens Community Apartments:**

- Improvements in the buildings exterior have been noticed by some of the group participants - things such as new paint and signs; landscaping
- Awareness amongst residents of SCA varied, some have noticed improved lighting, interior and exterior, and new paint within the apartments; inspections and related improvements
- Participants noticed actions being taken on one property that was burnt out.
- "They fixed a couple little things, so maybe they will do more."
- SCA publishes a newsletter for residents to update them about what is being done - work on lighting, painting and "slowly and steadily making improvements."
- One resident said they had done a lot of work in her building, the Windsor. She said they had added fencing and improved the area by doing some pruning of the bushes, etc.



- One resident said she would be "happier if they would just fix the hole in her bathroom wall."
- "Steadily and slowly I think they have done a great deal to remove a lot of the areas where there was a lot of junk and trash and people were hanging out."

#### **Nicollet Ave. Streetscape:**

- Most of the participants basically asked "what is it?" of the "streetscape improvements." Upon explaining the term and what types of improvements were included, most responded by saying the avenue generally looks nice.
- "They tore it up and just re-did it."
- One participant said he has really noticed that it has changed, the road and sidewalk has really improved.
- One participant suggested adding more trees versus doing any more bricks and mortar improvements.

#### **business development along Nicollet Ave.:**

- Participants also suggested better placement of the garbage cans
- The participants said the businesses referred to, Acadia, Frenz Brakes and Anthony Shane Florist, were good quality businesses
- Liked Acadia's connection to the arts community
- "They are a lot better than more check-cashing and dollar stores – predator stores."
- The participants said it is very nice to have all of these businesses within walking distance
- One individual suggested that the neighborhood needed a local nightclub/pub
- "The lot where they tore down that building, where the big hole is in the ground, that is an issue. What happened to what they were gonna build in there?"

#### **Jobs Project:**

- Not great familiarity with how the project works, but participants said they had seen signs for the job fairs
- "It's a nice idea."
- One participant said it was nice that some jobs highlight neighborhood businesses or businesses that were easily accessible.

#### **Stevens Square Park:**

- Playground addition was nice
- More flowers could be added
- Tables and benches should be added
- Structure should be further developed so that it is more useful and/or attractive
- "I think it[park structure] was a waste of money in the first place, but now that it is here, they should add a roof to it so that it is useful for picnicking or something."
- Dog owners should be held accountable for cleaning up after pets
- One participant said that he has noticed fewer people out using the park at night this winter versus last winter.

#### **block patrol:**

- Very positive activity
- Increases neighborhood safety
- "I live by myself and I am more willing to go places because I know that they are there. I like the fact they are there."

**7. What positive or negative changes have occurred in the neighborhood since you lived here?**

Have noticed improvements to the buildings around Stevens Square.

**8. What do you think should be the role of a neighborhood organization in this community?**

- Several participants agreed that the role of a community organization should be to promote communication within the neighborhood through vehicles like the neighborhood newsletter – “inform people of what is going on in the neighborhood and what events could be happening.” Increase awareness of SSCO board activities, board elections, volunteer opportunities, etc.
- Along the same lines, participants said the organization should bring people/neighborhood residents together.
- One participant said the organization should offer people a chance to provide input to the organization, through opportunities such as the focus groups. The organization should take such opportunities to learn from residents’ input and continually change and adjust to meet the needs of neighborhood residents.
- “Try to reach out and offer people a chance to do what we are doing tonight in some way, not necessarily through a focus group, but have some input into what the organization is doing and to have a place or way to go and do that.”
- “Also, periodically take some time to look at what you[SSCO] did, and what you liked and what you didn’t, and keep what you liked and change what you didn’t.”

**9. According to your knowledge of SSCO, how does this organization succeed or fail to fulfill this role?**

- One participant said they thought the organization does a good job of holding a variety of community gatherings and events.
- Another participant suggested that the SSCO increase its visibility by getting a sign for on the City of Lakes building so people know it exists and where it is located.
- “I’m just starting to learn about it and I think some of the recent publicity they did will help.”

## **NRP Evaluation Focus Group – February 6, 1999**

### **8 Participants**

- 4 Park Sector
- 3 Clinton Sector
- 1 Loring Heights Sector
- 5 females
- 3 males
- time lived in neighborhood: 7 months, 7 yrs, 3.5 yrs, 1 month, 9 yrs, 7 yrs, 8 months, 3 months

### **1. What neighborhood projects and programs are you familiar with?**

- Community gardening/greening program
- Block patrol and safety committee
- Improvements and additions to the park
- Greenway along the freeway
- Lighting program
- Mural painting and landscaping along that area
- Movies & Music in the park
- Winter lights

### **2. How do these programs or projects benefit the neighborhood?**

- Several participants commented on the community gardening projects and the greening program. One resident said, the greening program is nice for apartment dwellers, especially those who have lived in homes before, because it gives them an opportunity to still work in a "yard" or have a flowerbed or garden they can tend to. The program also allows residents to meet new people, as well as share something with their neighbors. The greening program is also very beneficial because it shows a sense of pride in the neighborhood.
- "For those of us who have itchy green fingers it is very nice to have just a little plot to grow something. I think a lot of people are sort of forced to live in apartments and it allows a sense of pride because it is something of yours to keep or yours to share."
- "It is interesting because people slow down and they look."
- Another participant said the gardens promote people getting out in the neighborhood, which decreases loitering and other types of criminal activity.
- "When I was looking for apartments and I came to this area I saw people out in the gardens and I thought 'people actually care about this area.' That was actually one of the big deciding factors for me to move here because it wasn't just people in their own apartments, people were actually taking care of the area."
- "The flowers are really beautiful, I really think the more attractive a place is the more peaceful it tends to be."
- One participant said the number of children playing in the park when she first visited the neighborhood made a strong impression on her. She said it really influenced her to move into the community. She thinks programs like the block patrol promote the type of safety and awareness that make it possible for kids to be out playing in the neighborhood.

- "What I have really, really learned to love about Stevens Square is the community involvement, things like the winter lights, and the carriage rides and getting together and meeting people. I think that can keep a neighborhood together faster than anything."
- The restorative justice program offers a win-win situation for the parties involved. It can also be linked with other community programs, such as the greening projects, for "offenders" required community service work.
- One participant said he did not know specifically what programs or projects could be credited, but that he has seen really good improvements in the neighborhood over the past 3 years. He said safety has improved, buildings have been upgraded, and problem buildings have been removed.
- "I think the more involvement in the community the better this area is gonna be so I really like seeing that[block patrol]."
- "I can remember where there was a time when it seemed like the area was deteriorating very fast, but within the last 3 years it has made a really good comeback."

### **3. How do these programs or projects need to be improved?**

- One participant said she would like to see better maintenance of the park, for example better up keep up the trash containers.
- Several participants agreed that there needs to be even more communication about SSCO programs and projects. Participants suggested more calling and doorknocking, interpersonal communication, versus flyering to get information about SSCO out to residents.
- Another participant said it is important for the organization to specifically increase residents' knowledge of NRP funding and projects so residents can get involved. "I would like to know exactly what the NRP funds are going for. We've talked a lot about the gardening, but I don't know what else is going on for example in terms of housing or in terms of stuff besides beautifying."
- A couple participants said they would specifically be interested in the types of economic development projects SSCO is trying to promote.

### **4. What additional programs or projects are necessary or appropriate for this neighborhood?**

- Several participants commented on issues related to neighborhood economic development. Nearly all of the participants said they would like to see improvements to the Mall Center, and specifically the grocery store. Participants said the Super Value is not only dirty, but also poorly managed. Although several residents said they shop at the store out of necessity, several residents who currently travel elsewhere to shop said they would utilize the store more if improvements were made.
- A couple participants said they would like to see some emphasis on business retention &/or recruitment efforts for businesses that move into the neighborhood. They suggested it is unfortunate to have vacant businesses and lots, such as those in the Mall Center and the lot next to Johnson Meat Company.
- One participant said he would like to see some of the Plymouth Church parking lot utilized for business development along Nicollet Ave.

- Participants said it is important to attract people down the mall from downtown and the convention center. They said further general improvements along Nicollet Ave., business improvements, could do just that.
- Several participants said they would really like to see the graffiti removed from the buildings in the neighborhood, perhaps further addressed/more emphasis from the block patrol.
- One participant suggested the police and/or SSCO work with a "graffiti interpreter" to determine what the markings/drawings mean so as to better understand what types of issues are involved.
- One participant suggested an art festival as an idea for an additional neighborhood event.

**5. How familiar are you with the NRP, the Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program directed by the City of Minneapolis?**

- A couple people said they were very familiar with the program, most people said they were somewhat familiar with the NRP, and a couple people said they basically had no knowledge of the program.

**6. The following projects or programs have been developed in conjunction with the NRP. What is your perception or impression of these programs or projects?**

**17<sup>th</sup> St. Overlook:**

- Participants said the 17<sup>th</sup> St. Overlook and greenway are very nice
- "Very nice, it was worthwhile."
- They said the walkway/greenway should be extended further
- The Nicollet lot, near the mural, should be utilized as a garden
- More trees should be planted

**Van Dusen Mansion:**

- Participants said the Van Dusen looks beautiful and has improved a lot
- Participants asked if they could get tours
- One participant asked if there were any efforts/involvement going on to facilitate improvements on the Sempel mansion because he had heard they were looking for monetary help for improvements also.

**Stevens Community Apartments:**

- The participants that live in SCA apartments said they have noticed upgrades to the buildings which have very nice apartments; one participant said she "couldn't ask for a nicer apartment"
- Non-SCA residents said the rehabilitation on the buildings looks great

**Nicollet Ave. Streetscape:**

- Participants said the lighting on the street looks very nice
- People noticed commented on the "Eat Street" banners, generally positive
- Participants said it would be good to continue to focus on transitioning, or connecting, the look of downtown to this neighborhood.
- One participant said there should be better upkeep of the garbage cans and they should be placed in more appropriate places

**business development along Nicollet Ave.:**

- Several participants agreed that the businesses referred to (Acadia, Frenz Brakes, Anthony Shane Florist) are lovely
- Participants also said Nicollet Ave. businesses have seen "lots of improvement"
- Other businesses cited as positives included the video and hardware stores in the Mall Center
- All of the participants agreed that the SuperValue needs improvements, that it is poorly run, dirty and overpriced, with a lack of quality, selection and variety. "It is embarrassing because I have friends that have come to visit and they say 'how can you shop at this store?'"
- Participants also said the bright lights of the Liquor Store should be toned down; one participant said the neighborhood around the Chicago/Lake Liquor Store convinced that store to turn down the neon lights while adding more lights to the store windows
- Participants said the 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Market is also a problem business in the neighborhood

#### **Jobs Project:**

- Participants said they have seen flyers for the Job Fairs but did not know much else about the program services

#### **Stevens Square Park:**

- All the participants said the park looks very nice
- One participant said she thinks having the bathroom available in the park is nice and particularly helpful in preventing "activities" residents would not want to see.
- One participant stated she would like to see the garbage emptied more regularly

#### **block patrol:**

- All the participants had general knowledge of the program and thought it was very positive for the neighborhood.
- One participant said she was aware of the patrol, but did not know actually what they did. Another participant active in the block patrol provided some more feedback about what the group actually did

### **7. What positive or negative changes have occurred in the neighborhood since you lived here?**

(This question was skipped over because the group was running out of time. However, at another point in the discussion, one participant said she has seen positive changes in the neighborhood just in the past 3 months. Another participant, as noted earlier, said he has seen great improvements over the past 3 years.)

### **8. What do you think should be the role of a neighborhood organization in this community?**

- Improve neighborhood safety
- Create a neighborhood that looks appealing
- Another resident said it is important for a neighborhood organization to not only improves the safety and appearance of a neighborhood organization, but also to make general improvements to the neighborhood that improves the area's livability. She did not suggest any specific issues related to livability, but said the neighborhood should be a place where residents want to continue to live.

- One participant said a neighborhood organization should strive to solicit ideas from neighborhood residents and then strive to develop those ideas into projects and programs.
- Another participant said a neighborhood organization should provide residents with access to funds and other resources to make property/neighborhood improvements.

**9. According to your knowledge of SSCO, how does this organization succeed or fail to fulfill this role?**

- One participant said she was concerned with the level of neighborhood communication. Several participants agreed that SSCO should continually try to improve neighborhood communication through flyers, newsletters and increased resident participation.
- A couple participants said SSCO should try to promote more kid-related activities.
- Participants said SSCO should also continue to promote neighborhood events and perhaps add additional events such as a farmer's market.
- As to SSCO's success as a neighborhood organization, one participant said she has seen many positive changes within the neighborhood during the short time she has lived here; as such, she said SSCO must have been doing something right. Other participants agreed.

### Some quotes from the focus groups:

- ✦ "Just getting the call to come to this meeting was great"
- ✦ "Everything I need is nearby, I can hangout at the coffee shop, grab something at a restaurant, go shopping, whatever."
- ✦ "Stevens Square Park is beautiful."
- ✦ "Great brownstones"
- ✦ "I was very scared when I moved to this neighborhood. I had did not have a choice, because I was going to be living in public housing and this was where I was located, but I love it now. I have really come to enjoy this neighborhood and when I am able again to choose where I live, I don't think I will leave this neighborhood. I have really come to love this area."
- ✦ "What it[a community] looks like is often what it[a community] is."
- ✦ "I like that the programs I am aware of involve a lot of people and help you get to know your neighbors."
- ✦ "It [greening] gives people an opportunity to meet, it gives people an opportunity to be outdoors."
- ✦ "The gardens give the impression that this is an area where people give a shit."
- ✦ "It is nice to live in an area with trees, flowers, lights – a place where I feel good about coming back too. It adds a lot, it really does"
- ✦ "I don't think I was really aware of what was going on until the newsletter started arriving and they inserted the calendar."
- ✦ "SSCO should be cautious "wearing people down" or "sucking the life out of volunteers."
- ✦ "It is nice[17<sup>th</sup> St. Overlook], a lot of those places if they are left completely undeveloped just become places for people to throw trash and stuff."
- ✦ "I live by myself and I am more willing to go places because I know that they[block patrol] are there. I like the fact they are there."
- ✦ "Try to reach out and offer people a chance to do what we are doing tonight in some way, not necessarily through a focus group, but have some input into what the organization is doing and to have a place or way to go and do that." (The role of a community organization)

### Some suggestions from the focus groups:

- ✦ have a sidewalk patrol - possibly block patrol - help enforce shoveling ordinances
- ✦ have a representative or contact in every building to increase outreach



- ✦ try to rely upon more "personal contact," such as more calling or doorknocking, for outreach; use flyers less because they don't get noticed
- ✦ encourage residents to call politicians and police as much as necessary, provide their phone numbers in the SSCO Herald
- ✦ have a community vegetable garden – (or since we have some, make people more aware that greening is not just for flowers!)
- ✦ put a top on the arbor in the park so it can be useful as a shelter from sun and rain
- ✦ get rid of the graffiti – maybe have block patrol put more attention on
- ✦ put vines on the arbor so it can be more attractive
- ✦ do more doorknocking
- ✦ keep up festivals, gatherings, community events – Movies & Music and Winterlights are great, maybe add an art festival or a farmer's market
- ✦ utilize area seniors for person power
- ✦ don't overburden volunteers
- ✦ promote youth activities
- ✦ have a Neighborhood National Night Out activity
- ✦ make sure the block club is out at night
- ✦ get a sign on City of Lakes Building to show that SSCO is there
- ✦ make improvements to the Mall Center, especially SuperValue
- ✦ don't let any SSCO meeting get bogged down with business, every meeting should be in part a social event and social opportunity
- ✦ the most important function of SSCO is to promote communication, a sense of community and opportunities to meet other neighbors
- ✦ provide residents with the number, perhaps via the Herald, to call in regards to violations of the shoveling ordinance
- ✦ create a "helping hand" card with numbers for shelters, food banks and other resources to give to panhandlers, bums, street persons
- ✦ keep improving lighting and fencing
- ✦ do something with the "big hole/big pile of dirt" next to Johnson Meat Company
- ✦ there is always more that could and should be done, so just keep at it!

## **Recruiting Forms**

### **Neighborhood Assessment Focus Group Recruiting Script**

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I'm calling from Stevens Square Community Organization.

We're holding some discussions to learn more about issues that are important to neighborhood residents. The discussion will involve meeting with 8 to 10 other neighborhood residents and a moderator. Refreshments will be provided for everyone who attends. Your opinions and ideas are very important. Would you be willing to participate in this discussion?

**If NO -**

Thank you very much for your time.

**If YES -**

Great, the discussion is being held on \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ pm at the City of Lakes Building located at 18th and Nicollet

We want to get feedback from a variety of people. To do this, we are trying to recruit people that have lived in the neighborhood for varying lengths of time. Could you tell me how long you have lived in the neighborhood?

Also, we would like to send you a confirmation letter. What is the correct spelling of your name and your mailing address?

Thank you again for your willingness to participate.

**NRP Evaluation Focus Group  
Recruiting Script**

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I'm calling from Stevens Square Community Organization.

We're holding some discussions to get feedback about neighborhood projects and programs that have been developed through the Minneapolis NRP.

How familiar are you with the Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program, often referred to as the NRP?

relatively familiar

not familiar, but have heard of it

not at all familiar

If "not at all familiar" –

Unfortunately, we are really looking for individuals with some knowledge of the NRP. Thank you for your time anyway.

The discussion will involve meeting with 8 to 10 other neighborhood residents and a moderator. Refreshments will be provided for everyone who attends. Your opinions and ideas are very important. Would you be willing to participate in this discussion?

**If NO -**

Thank you very much for your time.

**If YES -**

Great, the discussion is being held on \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ pm at the City of Lakes Building located at 18th and Nicollet

We want to get feedback from a variety of people. To do this, we are trying to recruit people that have lived in the neighborhood for varying lengths of time. Could you tell me how long you have lived in the neighborhood?

Also, we would like to send you a confirmation letter. What is the correct spelling of your name and your mailing address?

Thank you again for your willingness to participate.

## Confirmation Letter

February 1, 1999

Rick Osten  
102 E. 19<sup>th</sup> St.  
Apt. 115  
Minneapolis, MN 55404

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the group discussion about neighborhood issues and concerns. Your input is important and will be very helpful. The details of the focus group are below.

Date: Wednesday, February 3, 1999

Time: 6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Location: City of Lakes Building, corner of 18<sup>th</sup> St. & 1<sup>st</sup> Ave.  
Entrance on 18<sup>th</sup> St.

Room: Main Auditorium

The other people attending the discussion will be neighborhood residents also willing to share their concerns and opinions about the Stevens Square/Loring Heights neighborhood. The groups are designed to be small discussion groups, as such, your attendance is very important. If for some reason you find that you are not able to attend, please call me as soon as possible at 871-7307.

Unfortunately SSCO does not have the resources to provide financial rewards to participants, however you will receive a packet of neighborhood coupons and discount cards. Refreshments, snacks and beverages, will also be served.

Thank you again for your participation, your feedback will help inform neighborhood programs and projects.

Sincerely,

Katie Groen

## Focus Group Methodology

Four neighborhood focus groups were conducted over a two-week period. The first group was a Neighborhood Assessment group that focused on recruiting general feedback from residents about their neighborhood issues, concerns, resident opinions and ideas. The second group was an NRP Evaluation group that focused on getting feedback on neighborhood programs and projects that had developed as a result of the Minneapolis NRP.

Two groups were held on weekday evenings and two groups were held on Saturday mornings. Both time slots were relatively balanced.

In total:

- 29 neighborhood residents participated
- 14 females
- 15 males
- 16 Park sector residents
- 7 Loring Heights residents
- 6 Clinton Sector residents

time lived in the neighborhood:

- under 1 year = 5
- 1-2 years = 3
- 2-3 years = 3
- 3-4 years = 4
- 4-5 years = 2
- 5+ years = 11

### Recruiting Participants

Participants were recruited via one of two ways:

- Individuals were contacted via phone and asked to participate, or
- Individuals contacted SSCO after learning about the focus groups through flyers distributed to apartments and/or posted in neighborhood businesses.

Nearly all individuals recruited, perhaps with the exception of one or two individuals out of an approximate 50, were recruited via phone calls. Approximately 300-350 individuals were called over a time span of approximately 25-28 hours.

The phone list utilized was the SSCO database. Individuals that were knowingly quite active in the organization were not solicited with the aim of recruiting a fresher perspective. Only neighborhood residents were recruited to participate. Messages were left on answering machines, although few call-backs were received.

Twenty-nine neighborhood residents participated in the four groups. Approximately 50-52 individuals were recruited and confirmed in total. Those twenty plus individuals that did not ultimately participate did not, for the most part, contact SSCO to indicate that they would not be participating after all.

The initial assumption was that property owners could provide SSCO with tenant phone numbers and/or other contact information. However, no property owners were willing or able to do so, because they would be legally liable for that information. The property owners were however, more than willing to either post the flyer and a sign up sheet in a public place and/or distribute the flyers to individual apartments. Approximately 750 flyers were provided to property owners and assumably distributed.

Although the flyers, seemed to be a suitable method to publicize the focus groups, it appears personal contact with neighborhood residents was a much more successful method.

#### Confirming Participants

Individuals that indicated they would participate in the focus groups were sent confirmation letters a few days before the meeting date. Participants were also phoned the day or evening before the group as a reminder. Although all participants assumably received the letter and/or phone call, approximately 55 percent of the individuals who said they would participate did not show up for the focus group. As mentioned above, basically none of these individuals called to cancel.

#### Conducting the Focus Group

The focus groups were conducted at the City of Lakes Building, in either the front lounge or auditorium. A tape recorder with a table microphone was utilized to record the group's discussion. Food and beverages were provided for participants.

Each group addressed approximately nine questions over a one-hour period. Moderating focused on encouraging the participants to answer the questions thoroughly and to remain on subject. In most groups, the participants were quite successful in doing so. For some groups, questions were omitted or cut short because of time constraints.

#### Benefits

The focus groups were very interesting because they provided a different perspective on the issues addressed by this project. Participants raised issues that more involved individuals contacted throughout the project did not mention, particularly issues related to outreach and communication. These individuals provided new ideas and perspectives.

For SSCO, the information and quotes provided by these groups may be useful for publicity materials and/or grant applications. The groups also helped publicize SSCO's efforts, projects and programs to a new group of neighborhood residents.

#### Limitations

There are some limitations of the focus groups, which generally are a function of the resources this project had to work with.

The biggest limitation of the focus groups relates to the individuals that participated in the activity. Since this project relied on the SSCO database to recruit participants via telephone, the individuals recruited may not have been entirely representative of the

neighborhood. Most of the individuals had lived in the neighborhood for some time, which may not be very representative of this community. Also, SSCO staff said individuals listed in the database had had some previous contact with the organization, so their opinions would potentially have that influence. As a note, several participants said they could not imagine why they were in the database.

The information is clearly not statistically significant because the sample, as mentioned above, was not chosen randomly and only two groups were conducted for each focus area. CSR suggests doing at least four focus groups whenever conducting groups. However, according to the director at CSR, it is important to recognize that focus group information is not quantifiable data, it is qualitative data, regardless of the methodology used.

### Recommendations

A few suggestions for future focus groups:

- Focus groups should be organized and coordinated by more than one staff person. If the project does become the responsibility of one person, that person should not be a part-time staff person. For this project, the focus groups relied on one part-time staff person and the workload associated with coordinating these groups was significant.
- Use a reverse directory to recruit participants via the telephone. A reverse directory would allow SSCO to look up individuals by address or telephone number versus through a standard telephone book. According to the director of CSR, these directories are available at CURA or the Wilson Library at the University of Minnesota.
- Spend less time and resources on producing flyers. As mentioned above, approximately 750 flyers were produced and only one participant was recruited via these flyers. Most of the individuals said talking to them individually was a much more effective way to get them to participate.
- The focus groups should use less questions or should be extended for a greater length of time. In some groups, questions had to be omitted or brushed through to finish the group on time and allow participants to leave at the stated time.
- Lastly, just a reminder, double-check recording equipment. The equipment used for this project was tested before each meeting, but only worked during two of the groups.

## Focus Group Questions

### SSCO Neighborhood Assessment Focus Group Discussion Outline

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Purpose: Determine the issues of interest and concern to Stevens Square/Loring Heights neighborhood residents.
3. Focus Group Discussion Guidelines:
  - There is no right or wrong answer, only individual opinions.
  - Everyone is encouraged to participate; a variety of ideas and answers is very important to SSCO.
  - Do not interrupt.
  - Be respectful of individual opinions.
  - Feel free to ask clarifying questions.
  - An audiotape is being used to help us keep an accurate record of opinions and ideas. However, individual responses will be kept confidential.

### Discussion Questions

1. What are the assets of this neighborhood?
2. What are the challenges facing this neighborhood?
3. What do you think should be changed about this neighborhood?
4. How could these changes be made?
5. What was your perception of this neighborhood before you moved into the neighborhood?
6. How has your perception changed or been enhanced?
7. How do you think this neighborhood is perceived by individuals outside the neighborhood?
8. What do you think should be the role of a neighborhood organization in this community?
9. According to your knowledge of SSCO, how does this organization succeed or fail to fulfill this role?



## SSCO NRP Evaluation Focus Group Discussion Outline

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Purpose: Determine the recognition or knowledge of neighborhood NRP projects and programs. Determine the perception and assessment of those projects and programs.
3. Focus Group Discussion Guidelines:
  - There is no right or wrong answer, only individual opinions.
  - Everyone is encouraged to participate; a variety of ideas and answers is very important to SSCO.
  - Do not interrupt.
  - Be respectful of individual opinions.
  - Feel free to ask clarifying questions.
  - An audiotape is being used to help us keep an accurate record of opinions and ideas. However, individual responses will be kept confidential.

### Discussion Questions

1. What neighborhood projects and programs are you familiar with?
  - Safety initiatives?
  - Services initiatives?
  - Environment initiatives?
  - Development initiatives?
2. How do these programs or projects benefit the neighborhood?
3. How do these programs or projects need to be improved?
4. What additional programs or projects are necessary or appropriate for this neighborhood?
5. How familiar are you with the NRP, the Neighborhood Revitalization Program directed by the City of Minneapolis? What do you know about the NRP in this neighborhood?
6. The following projects or programs have been done in conjunction with the NRP. What is your perception or impression of these programs or projects?
  - 17th Street Overlook
  - Van Dusen Mansion
  - Stevens Community Apartments rehabilitation
  - other rental property improvements
  - Nicollet Avenue streetscape
  - business development along Nicollet – Acadia, Frenz brakes, Anthony

Shane Florist, Mall businesses, etc.  
SSCO/LNB jobs project  
Stevens Square Park  
block patrol

7. How long have you lived in the neighborhood? What positive or negative changes have occurred in the neighborhood since you lived here?
8. What do you think should be the role of a neighborhood organization in this community?
9. According to your knowledge of SSCO, how does this organization succeed or fail to fulfill this role?

## Focus Group Summaries

### Neighborhood Assessment Focus Group – January 28, 1999

#### Eight participants

- 4 Park Sector
- 4 Loring Heights Sector
- 4 females
- 4 males
- time lived in neighborhood: 7 yrs, 6 yrs, 3 yrs, 3 months, 1 yr, 2.5 yrs, 7 yrs, 5 yrs

#### 1. What are the assets of this neighborhood?

- architecture
- proximity to downtown
- easy, available bus service
- diversity
- urban living
- easy access to things – downtown, freeways, other areas of Minneapolis and the metro area
- nice improvement with walkway and gardens
- can have a dog in apartment
- good restaurants nearby
- “everything I need is nearby, I can hangout at the coffee shop, grab something at a restaurant, go shopping, whatever.”
- “Stevens Square Park is beautiful.”
- “great brownstones”
- “urban living” atmosphere

#### 2. What are the challenges facing this neighborhood?

- empty retail lots - space next to Johnson's is just a big mound of dirt & empty space in the mall center
- more concern with crime, than in recent past
- tired of being asked to buy drugs
- neighborhood watch only covers daytime and not nighttime
- area needs brighter lights
- some downtown bus routes should extend, downtown service? downtown rates?
- at nighttime can not go in the park, walk down third avenue, or into third avenue market, without encountering drug dealers, other illegal activity, or feeling unsafe, mention of prostitution

Nearly all of the focus of this discussion was on crime. All the participants thought crime was an important neighborhood issue, but with varying degrees of exposure to it. One participant said he was tired of constantly being approached about buying drugs. He said in the evenings the streets, particularly 2nd, 3rd and 19th, are not safe. Although he does not “fear for his life,” the obvious presence of crime is disturbing. Two female participants said they are aware that criminal activity is going on, but they have not felt as

threatened as maybe they "should be." Both said they have walked alone at night, one woman said only when she has her dog, and feel okay about that although they do avoid some streets, particularly those on the east side of Stevens Square Park. One of the women said that it is definitely obvious that "there are a lot of people out at all hours of the night," which she found somewhat concerning.

During much of the discussion focused on crime, the participants talked about ways to deter crime. Measures such as knowing your neighbors and watching out for each other, having locks on both inner and outer entryway doors, not letting unknown individuals into the building, being aware of your surroundings when walking, looking individuals in the eyes when walking, etc.

In relation to the need to fill some of the vacant retail spaces, none of the participants had any suggestions about specific businesses they thought the neighborhood needed. Generally, people seemed content with their access to businesses.

### **3. What do you think should be changed about this neighborhood?**

- promote greater neighborhood communication - opportunities to sit down and talk like this
- increase lighting
- more fencing - like the rod-iron fencing that was put up between some buildings
- block club should patrol at night
- people should be able to use the park at all times - day and night, and walk wherever they want to in the neighborhood
- residents should not be harassed by drug dealers

### **4. How could these changes be made?**

Participants really thought SSCO should do more outreach, make itself more visible and promote and/or continue to promote neighborhood events. Participants said they did not think that using flyers was a good way to publicize events or the organization. For the most part, they said flyers whether distributed or posted get disregarded. Individuals suggested establishing contact in each building that can promote SSCO events, or holding more meetings/outreach/announcements within buildings. "Even just getting the call to come to this meeting was great" said a couple of residents.

### **5 & 6. What was your perception of this neighborhood before you moved into the neighborhood? How has your perception changed or been enhanced?**

Participant's perceptions about the neighborhood before they moved in varied. One resident said she had no preconceived notions about the neighborhood, while another resident said she was very familiar with the neighborhood.

One resident said she was very scared when she moved in because her property manager/building neighbor told her several stories about crime and safety problems in the building and the neighborhood. After having lived in the neighborhood for 2.5 years, she said she has had no problems. Although she said she is aware of criminal activity,

the focus group discussion made her think she may be somewhat naive about neighborhood problems because she is not overly concerned with crime.

Another female resident said she was also scared by the stories a building neighbor told her, but has had no problems in the three months she has lived in the neighborhood. In addition to hearing stories, she also said she was very excited about moving into the neighborhood when she found the SSCO website, after having been in the neighborhood just a few weeks. She thought the website looked great, but had not heard of the organization besides that during her time in the neighborhood.

A male resident said he thought he was living in Brooklyn when he first moved in. He talked about the constant drug dealing and harassment by dealers. He said he did not enjoy his first summer in the neighborhood as much as he would have liked to because he was not able to go the park, both during the day and at night. His bad perception has been supported.

One male said the neighborhood has seen great improvement in the past 10-15 years, perhaps 20-fold.

**7. How do you think this neighborhood is perceived by individuals outside the neighborhood?**

Everyone strongly agreed that the neighborhood is perceived very negatively by people outside of the organization. People said it is perceived "horribly," "my parents cried when they moved me here," "my friends won't come visit me."

One male participant said he has people say, "you live where? are you feeling safe there?" He said most people think Nicollet to Chicago and 26th St. to downtown is the ghetto of south Minneapolis, the absolute worst area. Another woman said when she had coworkers meet at her apartment one individual checked on his car every 15 minutes to make sure it was still there.

**8. What do you think should be the role of a neighborhood organization in this community?**

One participant suggested the role of SSCO should be to promote resident involvement and interaction. Most of the participants agreed with this statement. They said a community organization should help create opportunities for residents to get to know their neighbors and get involved with the community and the community organization.

As a word of wisdom, one participant suggested that the organization also be cautious of not "wearing people down" or "sucking the life out of volunteers." The woman said she had been involved with her neighborhood organization in another city, but got so worn down, that she has been hesitant to get involved here. She said the meetings of this group were often very long and too involved. She said SSCO should really try to balance a business-like meeting with a social event.

## Neighborhood Assessment Focus Group – January 30, 1999

### Seven participants

- 4 Park sector
- 2 Clinton sector
- 1 Loring Heights sector
- 3 females
- 4 males
- time lived in neighborhood: 12 yrs, 4 yrs, 8 months, 3 yrs, 2.5 yrs, 4 yrs, 15 yrs

### 1. What are the assets of this neighborhood?:

- location
- ability to walk to work
- diversity of people, ages & ethnicities
- neighborhood pulls together to address issues & challenges
- Stevens Square Park
- older, classic buildings
- Nicollet Avenue improvements
- other general neighborhood improvements
- accessible ethnic restaurants
- trees & greening
- neighborhood activities such as the Harvest Festival, Movies & Music, Fair in the Square, etc.

### 2. What are the challenges facing this neighborhood?:

- crime - mostly misdemeanors, shoplifting, car break-ins, etc., - versus violent crime
- lack of parking
- non-residents parking in neighborhood and walking downtown
- new immigrants pose new social issues and challenges, particularly the language barriers and cultural differences
- problem landlords - lack of maintenance, negligence, no snow removal

People said crime was a problem, but really as related to misdemeanors. None of the participants said they felt violent crime was an issue and most said they did not feel scared or threatened in this neighborhood.

A couple of the residents, from the same building, said they are relatively worried about the crime in their building. Both said they had seen the crime decrease over the last couple of years, but now have a sense that it may be back on the rise.

One participant said a real challenge is addressing the fact that it seems the crime that does occur is not committed by neighborhood residents, but by individuals coming in from outside the community.

One participant, with the agreement of another, said the parking in the neighborhood is really getting bad. One resident familiar with SSCO's exploration of "critical parking" in

the neighborhood pointed out that this issue was being addressed. Other participants seemed interested and in favor of the committee exploring the issue.

A couple participants suggested that the waves of new immigrants and demographic changes in the neighborhood are prohibiting the neighborhood from developing a strong sense of community. They said the language and cultural differences present significant problems. Both of these individuals suggested they were interested in working on neighborhood events with the new resident/immigrant populations, but did not know to do so.

One participant, with the agreement of others, said "problem" landlords have a negative influence on both neighborhood beautification and neighborhood livability. A lack of maintenance and negligence with properties, even with simple things like a lack of snow shoveling, can have negative impacts on the residents of that building(s), but also the broader neighborhood.

### **3. What do you think should be changed about this neighborhood?:**

The participants suggested the items addressed in the previous question are the types of things that should be changed, addressed or improved in the neighborhood.

They also suggested there should be a continual push to increase awareness of SSCO programs and projects among residents, as well as involvement with those programs, projects and any one-time events.

### **4. How could these changes be made?:**

Participants suggested addressing crime by encouraging residents to call the police and local politicians as often as necessary. They thought SSCO could help promote this avenue by providing residents with the appropriate information and phone numbers, perhaps through the newsletter.

Continuing to increase lighting in the neighborhood and around properties is another way the participants thought the issue of crime could be addressed.

A couple participants suggested that the block club could address the problem of property owners not shoveling their walkways. Since shoveling is required by a city ordinance, they thought the block patrol could report property owners that are not in compliance.

The participants suggested generally getting more residents involved and aware of the activities and issues in the neighborhood, both positive and negative, would certainly help address most issues, particularly problems related to crime or snow shoveling.

### **5 & 6. What was your perception of this neighborhood before you moved into the neighborhood? How has your perception changed or been enhanced?:**

One resident said, "I was very scared when I moved to this neighborhood. I had did not have a choice, because I was going to be living in public housing and this was where I was located, but I love it now. I have really come to enjoy this neighborhood and when I

am able again to choose where I live, I don't think I will leave this neighborhood. I have really come to love this area."

Another resident said, she was familiar with the area because her brother had been involved with movies and music. She said she had a positive impression of the neighborhood prior to moving in and has enjoyed the neighborhood since.

**7. How do you think this neighborhood is perceived by individuals outside the neighborhood?**

All of the participants agreed that individuals outside of this community have a negative perception of the neighborhood. They said co-workers and others acquaintances often react to this neighborhood by saying, "you live there?" Some residents said they have often even heard the same type of thing from friends. One resident said he always has to meet friends at his door, walk them in to and out of the building to reassure them that it is safe to be here.

**8. What do you think should be the role of a neighborhood organization in this community?**

The participants generally agreed that a major function of a neighborhood organization should be to bring people together to discuss and debate issues, generate new ideas, meet other neighborhood residents, have fun, and generally get involved with their community. They mentioned neighborhood events and general outreach as the ways an organization should/could get people involved.

The participants also said a neighborhood organization should focus on improving the environment of a community, particularly as related to the physical environment and safety. Clean-ups and beautification efforts are important because, as one resident said, "what it[a community] looks like is often what it[a community] is."

**9. According to your knowledge of SSCO, how does this organization succeed or fail to fulfill this role?**

Several of the participants indicated they did not have enough knowledge about SSCO to make any strong conclusions. All of the participants agreed that SSCO's current programs and projects are positive, generally fulfilling a need and generally well organized. The challenge, however, is that there is always more that could and should be done.

Participants emphasized bringing people together, even if just in small groups such as a focus group, to encourage communication. Participants said it is important to try to get people involved, and not just always the same people. They suggested utilizing the seniors in the neighborhood and developing youth programs to get youth involved.

Along the same lines, participants said publicity and outreach is important. They thought the newsletter will be a positive tool to promote the organization and its programs and projects. They also suggested more doorknocking to establish better contact with residents.



The participants also agreed that the neighborhood organization should continue to focus on issues of crime and safety.

**9. According to your knowledge of SSCO, how does this organization succeed or fail to fulfill this role?**

Several people said they really did not know much about the organization so they could not speak to the types of programs and projects directed by the organization. A couple people asked if the organization does any outreach. Unaware of the Herald, one woman said she would suggest a community newsletter or newspaper. A couple people said they had seen the newsletter, others said they did not know if they had received or seen it in their buildings, while others said they were quite sure they had not seen it.

A couple of participants said they had either attended or been aware of the movies and music in the park events and thought those were really great events. They said the organization should definitely continue this program as well as add more similar events.

Almost half of the participants were aware of the block patrol, and they all felt it was a positive program. However, one participant stressed the need for the block patrol at night versus during the day. Other participants agreed that the block patrol would likely have more impact on criminal activity if they operated at night since this is the time that they all felt criminal activity was occurring.

The participants indicated events were an important way to bring residents together and do outreach. They said the events SSCO currently organizes are very positive, and a few residents suggested adding more, particularly an event in relation to National Night Out.

All of the participants thought the beautifying efforts through neighborhood greening projects, and neighborhood clean-ups were good.

A researcher working with the local neighborhood organization seeks residents willing to take part in a focus group to share their thoughts, concerns & ideas about the Stevens Square/Loring Heights neighborhood.



- small, informal discussion groups  
⇒ express concerns & opinions
- one hour sessions  
⇒ inform neighborhood leadership
- one-time involvement  
⇒ create communication, create community

Snacks and beverages provided for participants!!!

Focus groups to be held in  
late January & early February.  
Call Katie at 871-7307 to sign up!